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NICK CARTER STORIES

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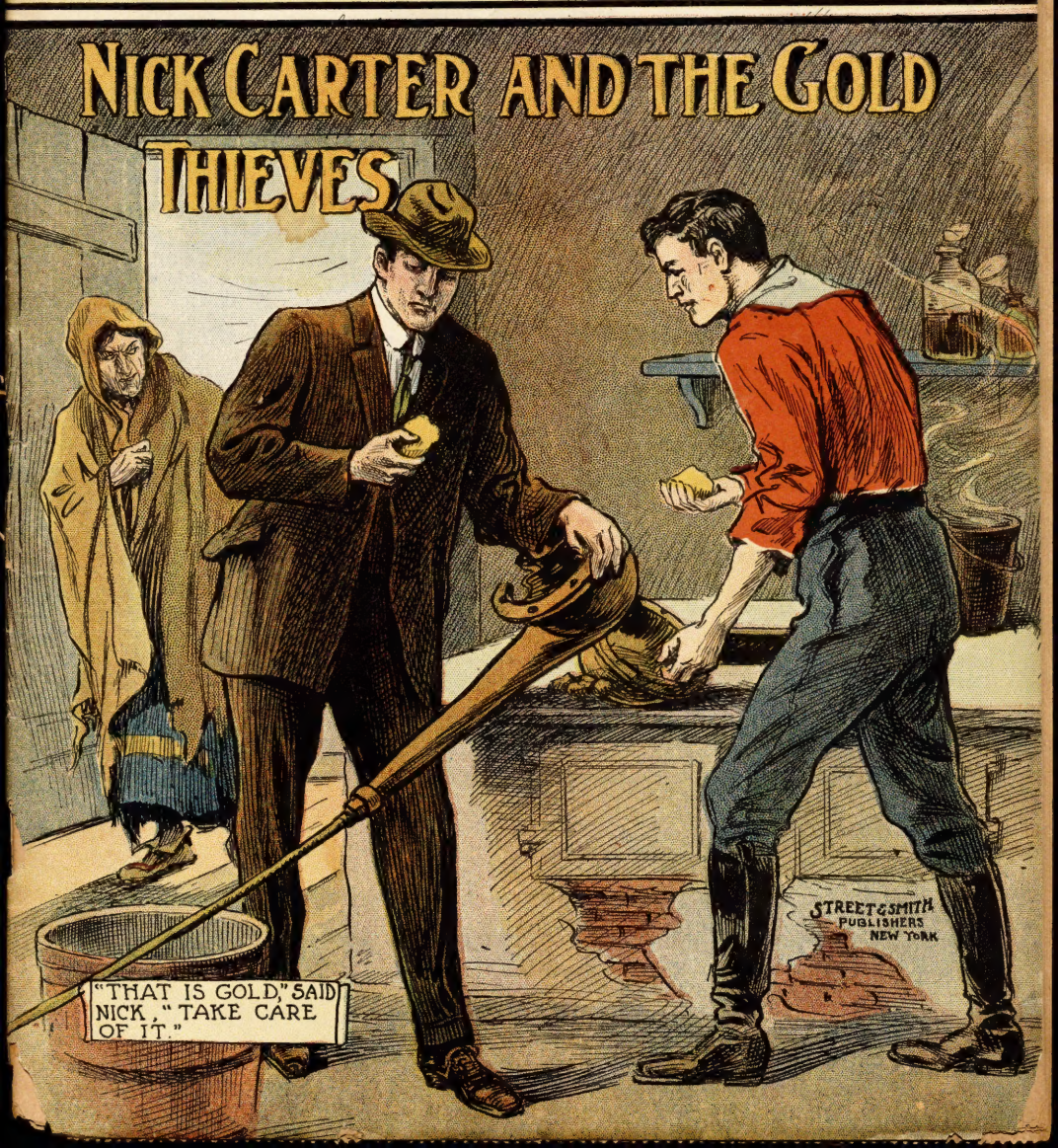

NICK CARTER STORIES

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NICK CARTER AND THE GOLD THIEVES;

Or, THE GRUBSTAKE MILL CONSPIRACY.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS GRAFT.

"Your coming was entirely unexpected, Mr. Carter."

"It is the unexpected, Mr. Dalrymple, that is pretty sure to happen; especially in my line of work."

"You have come——"

The manager hesitated, cleared his throat, and gave the great detective an inquiring glance.

"Twenty-five hundred miles," said Nick.

"Just to—or—— May I inquire, Mr. Carter, just what you have come twenty-five hundred miles to do?"

"To carry out the instructions of Mr. Cecil Trenwyck, a shareholder in the Grubstake Mining Company and a resident of New York."

"And those instructions are——"

"To locate the trouble at the Grubstake stamp mill and eliminate it."

"Trenwyck told you to call on me?"

"Mr. Trenwyck said you would coöperate with me to the extent of giving details which he could not furnish."

"I see. The work cut out for you, Mr. Carter, is full of peril."

"Quite likely."

"If you think more of your life than you do of a fat fee I'd advise you to throw up the case."

Nick Carter's eyes traveled over the manager slowly until they rested on his face.

"We don't look at the matter in the same light," said he quietly.

"We have already had two detectives probing into the difficulty, Mr. Carter; a Chicago man last month and a San Francisco man the month before."

"What did they discover, if anything?"

"They never lived to report."

Nick's interest increased.

"If you will allow me, Mr. Dalrymple, I should like to get at the details categorically."

"I am at your service, Mr. Carter."

"Then, as I understand it, the Grubstake Mining Company is being systematically robbed?"

"Correct. And the system is as effective as it is mysterious."

"The losses are so heavy that no dividends have been declared for the past five months?"

"We figure our losses at a hundred thousand, so far, Mr. Carter. Heaven only knows how much more they will foot up before the thieves are apprehended."

"The thieving is going on now?"

"All the time."

"The fact is this, then: You know you are being robbed, but you don't know how. I'd like you to tell me just what you do know."

"We have a very thorough checking system in the stamp mill, and are able to tell, within a few hundred dollars, how much we are out.

"The Grubstake mill has four batteries—twenty stamps in all—and is running on high-grade, free-milling ore.

"As the crushed ore is fed into the hoppers, every tenth shovelful is thrown aside. The ore thus reserved is quartered down daily and assayed."

"In that way you get the average value of the ore milled?"

"Precisely.

"How much does it run?"

"It runs about forty-three dollars to the ton, varying little one way or the other. This forty-three-dollar rock is crushed in the battery boxes and carried over the plates.

"The quicksilver on the plates should pick out most of

the gold, for, when the crushed ore runs off the plates into the tailings trough, it assays only three dollars to the ton."

"Showing that forty dollars to the ton should have been left on the plates?"

"Exactly so, Mr. Carter. The capacity of each battery is seven tons per day, both shifts."

Nick made a rapid calculation.

"Total mill capacity twenty-eight tons per day, or one thousand, one hundred dollars for every twenty-four-hour run."

"That's what it should be, Mr. Carter. Our bi-monthly clean-ups ought to show bullion to the amount of fifteen thousand dollars. But they don't."

"How much do they show?"

"Only five thousand dollars."

"Proving that every two weeks ten thousand dollars goes into the battery boxes and never reaches the plates?"

"Or if it does reach the plates, we don't get it. Query: what becomes of the missing gold? It's a mystery."

"This has been going on for five months?"

"Yes."

"The gold could not be stolen in the form of bullion?"

Dalrymple shot a keen glance at the detective.

"No," he answered, "the gold must be stolen in the form of amalgam—gold and quicksilver mixed, you understand?"

"Ten thousand in bullion would weigh forty or fifty pounds Troy, wouldn't it?"

"About that."

"And in that form of amalgam how much would it weigh?"

"That depends; not less than two hundred and fifty pounds, I should say."

"Then a hundred thousand in amalgam should weigh not less than two thousand five hundred pounds. To move that amount of booty would take time, and to market it safely would also take time. The very magnitude of the operation, Mr. Dalrymple, is——"

The manager gave a half start in his chair. His glasses dropped off, and Nick caught them as they fell.

Again was the detective's calm scrutiny on Dalrymple's face as the glasses were returned.

"What do you argue from that?" queried Dalrymple, in an attempt of nonchalance.

"Very little of much importance. I would like a letter to the superintendent at the mine, Mr. Dalrymple."

"A letter of introduction?"

"No. A letter telling him I am a good man and you have promised me work."

"You'll go out there in disguise?"

"Probably."

"What sort of a disguise?"

"Roustabout," said Nick, in his most artless tone. "Name of Dave Jarvis."

Dalrymple wrote busily for a few moments and then put the letter in an envelope without sealing.

He addressed the envelope: "Mr. Nate Crosby, Chase & Bidwell's, City."

"It's very fortunate, Mr. Carter," said he, "that the super happens to be in Helena, loading up with supplies for the mine. You will find him at Chase & Bidwell's store any time this forenoon, and can get a ride out with him."

"Very good."

Nick got up and started out, Dalrymple rising and following.

"I wish you all success possible, Mr. Carter."

"Thank you. Good morning."

Nick passed out briskly by a private entrance leading into the main hall of the office building.

"He came a good ways from telling me all he knew," thought Nick, halting at the top of the stairs. "The question is what does he intend doing with that information concerning the roustabout named Dave Jarvis?"

Back in the office Nick heard the manager walk hurriedly across the room.

Then came the swift br-r-r-r of a messenger call, twice repeated.

"We'll see," said Nick to himself.

He did not pass down the stairs, but retired up the dark hallway and waited.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN TO BUSINESS.

The messenger boy arrived in a few minutes and turned in at the public entrance to the mining company's suite of offices.

Presently he came out and went leisurely down the stairs, whistling as he went.

Throwing off his coat and hat, Nick dropped them in one corner.

Then he pushed back his shirt sleeves and ran down after the boy.

The latter was only a little distance away when Nick called after him.

"What is it?" the messenger asked, turning around.

He was just putting the letter in his book, and held it in such a way that Nick was able to see the address: "Mr. Nate Crosby, Chase & Bidwell's, City."

The address was identical with that on the letter which Dalrymple had given the detective.

"Mr. Dalrymple wants to add a line to that note."

"Gee! Had anudder t'ink, did he?"

"He forgot something he wants to put in."

"Den it's me back t' de office, hey?"

"Go back if you want to. Or give the letter to me and I'll bring it to you."

Nick had every appearance of being from the mining company's office.

The boy did not remember seeing him there, but that was a minor point.

The detective spoke and acted like one who had authority and knew his business.

After an instant's hesitation the letter was handed over.

"I'll wait in de hall," the boy said.

"It will only take a minute," answered the detective.

Nick turned back and bounded lightly up the stairs.

"I've taken this case," he thought, "but I'm working for Trenwyck. I might as well get down to business right now."

He hastily tore open the envelope as he retreated down the hall to the place where he had left his coat and hat. Then he removed the letter and read it quickly.

It was short and very much to the point:

"NATE: Trenwyck has got on his war paint and has sent Nick Carter out here just as he threatened to do. We've got to market the stuff P. D. Q. Understand?

Keep your eyes peeled for a roustabout named Dave Jarvis—he'll be the man. Give him a job at the mine; and then take care of him. If you don't, it's a case of upsticks, sure. DAL."

"I could have sworn there was something like this going on," muttered Nick.

Just then he heard the boy clumping slowly up the stairs.

Taking from his pocket the letter Dalrymple had given him, Nick slipped it out of the envelope, slipped the other letter inside, and sealed the flap.

"All right, son," he said, meeting the messenger at the top of the stairs.

The boy took the letter, and once more went down.

Nick minced the torn envelope into fragments and threw them into a cuspidor; then he put on his hat and coat and started to leave the building.

As he reached the head of the flight, the private door leading into Dalrymple's private office suddenly opened.

Facing about quickly, Nick found himself confronted by the manager.

It was evident that Dalrymple had heard something in the hall which had aroused his suspicions.

"Ah!" exclaimed the manager. "Is that you, Carter? You seemed in quite a hurry when you were in here."

"So I was, and am now, for that matter. But there's another point that just occurred to me."

"Step in and I'll enlighten you, if I can."

Nick stepped into the private office and closed the door.

"Who was the Chicago man?" he asked.

"Job Riley."

"And the San Francisco detective?"

"Phil Kessler."

"How were they killed?"

"They went crazy. Kessler fell over a cliff and Riley dropped six hundred feet down the main shaft at the Grubstake."

"That will be all, Mr. Dalrymple."

The instant the door closed behind Nick, the manager opened the door opposite and called a clerk.

"Get on your hat and coat quick, Jenkins," said Dalrymple, "and follow the man who was in here a moment ago. Did you see him when he came through the office?"

"Sure," answered Jenkins. "I was the one he spoke to when he asked for you."

"Well, follow him. See if he changes his clothes and goes to Chase & Bidwell's and asks for Nate Crosby. Then come back and tell me. Off with you."

Jenkins rushed through the other room, caught his hat and coat off the wardrobe pegs, and put them on as he ran down the stairs.

Ten minutes after leaving the office building, Nick was in the parlor of the Gault House, one of the best hotels in Helena, Montana, with his right bower, Chick.

"The ball has opened," announced Nick.

"So soon?" returned Chick, with visible satisfaction. "Good."

"Where's Patsy?"

"On deck," said Patsy, stepping into the parlor and closing the door. "You were shadowed from the Hoffman Building, Nick."

"I thought I might be."

There were only the three detectives in the room, and Patsy stepped to a window overlooking the street.

"There's the cove now," he said, standing at one side of the window and pointing.

"He's from the mining company's office, all right," said Nick, glancing out at a man on the sidewalk opposite. "I remember seeing him there. The manager's keeping tab on the play, and no mistake."

"I was halfway down the block when you came out of the building," continued Patsy. "The fellow followed you, and I picked him up and trailed along here."

"Let him stand there for the present," laughed Nick, turning away and joining Chick on the other side of the room. "Just now we've got other fish to fry."

"Did you get anything out of Dalrymple more than Trenwyck told us?" queried Chick.

"Lots," and Nick gave a brief résumé of recent events.

Chick whistled.

"Tried to scare you out," grinned Patsy.

"And when I mentioned the bulky nature of the booty the mill thieves had to handle," said Nick, "the manager got a thrill. He dropped his glasses."

"He'll stand watching," said Chick.

"That's your work, Patsy," said Nick; don't let the manager lose you for a minute."

"Is that all?" Patsy asked, starting for the door.

"All for now," said the detective, and Patsy left the room.

"Mark what I say, Chick," said Nick, "the magnitude of this robbery will prove the undoing of the thieves. Twenty-five hundred pounds of stolen amalgam, more or less, isn't the easiest thing in the world to handle."

"Perhaps some of it has already been turned into cash? This has been going on for five months."

"But Dalrymple said in his note to the super, 'We've got to market the stuff P. D. Q.'"

"That's so."

"He may have referred to the loot, or to something else. We must find that out."

"The ball opens with a hot starter, anyhow. What part am I cast for?"

"The roustabout, Dave Jarvis."

Nick took from his pocket the letter given him by Dalrymple.

In it the manager had simply said that the bearer, Dave Jarvis, was a good man, and that he—Dalrymple—had promised him a job. In conclusion, the manager hoped that Jarvis "would be taken care of."

"This is a far-reaching conspiracy, Chick," said Nick, passing the letter to his assistant, "and there are some surprises in store for Trenwyck and other shareholders in the mining company. What you want is a place in the mill."

"I'll get it."

"You know what Nate Crosby intends to do by Dave Jarvis."

"He won't do it, though."

"He'll try hard enough."

"Forewarned is forearmed."

"The Chicago man and the San Francisco man both came to grief."

"It will be different with the New York man."

"Of course. It won't do for you to go crazy and tumble down a shaft, or over a cliff."

"Hardly."

"You'll ride out with the super, but I shall make an effort to reach the Grubstake Mine ahead of you."

Five minutes later a man in a slouch hat, flannel shirt,

and with trousers tucked in the tops of cowhide boots, left the hotel.

Crossing the street, he halted a passer-by and asked the way to Chase & Bidwell's.

Jenkins was close enough to hear the question and answer, and Nick, watching from the upper window, saw him follow Chick when the latter took his way down the street.

"That fellow was instructed to look out for me in a make-up," thought Nick, as he turned from the window. "Dalrymple's first card is a misplay, but he doesn't know it."

Chick was following instructions as he always did, and, after a speedy journey, arrived at the mine in safety.

CHAPTER III.

FIST WORK VERSUS KNIFE PLAY.

A stage left Helena at ten in the morning and reached the Grubstake Mine in Big Belt Mountains at three in the afternoon.

A brisk young fellow got down from the stage at the company store in the camp and asked Nod Holloway, the storekeeper, where the super could be found.

The super was in town, the stranger was told, but the assistant super was over at the office.

The young man thought the assistant super would do, and to the office he accordingly went.

"Are you the assistant super?" he asked of a middle-aged man who sat at a desk.

"That's me, pard—Clem Hendricks by name."

"My name's Keene, and I'm writing up the Montana mines for the *Miners' Times*, of Kansas City. Got any objections to my staying here and nosing around a little?"

"Not a darned objection, Mr. Keene. Just say all the good you can of us, that's all. Want me to show you over the layout?"

"No, thanks, Mr. Hendricks, I won't put you to the trouble. I'll just drift around and gather up my material in my own way. I may get through in two days and it may take me a week."

"Stay a month if you like. Hang out at the boardin' house; the company'll stand for your chuck and blankets."

"Much obliged. Smoke?"

"Don't care if I do," and Clem Hendricks took the half dozen cigars which the reporter handed him. "If you can't find what you want, Keene, speak out, and speak real loud. We can't treat you newspaper fellers too well."

For the next three hours the reporter drifted about considerable.

He drifted over to the bunk house and sized up the night shift, just getting up for supper and preparing for a turn in the mill.

Then he floated into the mill and took in the establishment from feed loft to engine room.

For quite a while he was around back of the battery boxes, and the day boss eyed him suspiciously as he jotted things down in a little memorandum book.

From the batteries he rolled into the boiler room.

He would have talked, but the roar of the stamps—twenty of them, and each falling ninety-eight drops to the minute—made talking impossible.

Wherever he went he left a trail of cigars, and could have been followed by a fog of burning tobacco.

By and by he drifted away among a lot of unsightly ore piles, some distance from the camp, shoved his little book and his pencil into his pocket, and sat down to think.

"The assistant super is straight, and I'll bank on it," he reflected.

"There are four men on each shift in the mill: an engineer, two amalgamators, and a crusher man.

"Neither the engineers nor the crusher men ever get within fifty feet of the plates or battery boxes, and they are in no position to see what's going on in the body of the mill.

"They look square, and the clique of thieves would take in only those whom they found necessary. That's simple enough.

"The four amalgamators are in it and engineer the graft.

"They get the amalgam somehow, and somebody else does the rest—no doubt Nate Crosby and Dalrymple.

"The point is to find out how the graft is worked, and to catch the whole outfit red-handed.

"That's where we will encounter the breakers, and——"

Nick's reflections were interrupted by a muffled screech coming from behind one of the neighboring ore heaps.

There was nothing human in the sound, and it might have been the maddened cry of some animal for all the detective could tell.

In a flash he was up and racing toward the point from which the cry had come.

As he rounded the rock pile, the hoarse tones of a man's voice fell on his ears accompanied by a noise indicative of a scuffle, and, in a moment, a queer spectacle burst on his eyes.

A burly ruffian—recognized by Nick as one of the night amalgamators whom he had seen in the bunk house—was battling furiously with a woman.

The woman was a hunchback, was bare-headed, and was dressed in a nondescript costume, part Mexican, part American, part Indian.

Long gray hair hung about her weazened face in a tangled mat, and with her skinny brown fingers she was clinging to the millman's throat like a leech.

With all his strength the man was endeavoring to release himself, swearing gaspingly, and seeking with one hand to draw a knife from the breast of his coat.

An instant after Nick came upon the scene the amalgamator, by a terrific effort, hurled the hag from him to the rocks.

She fell in a heap, stunned and helpless.

"Now, curse you," roared the ruffian, "I'll have yer infernal life fer what ye done! They say ye've got as many lives as a cat, but I'll have one of 'em!"

He sprang toward the miserable old creature, knife in hand, but before he could carry out his murderous purpose, Nick had leaped in front of him.

"Not so fast!" cried Nick.

The ruffian drew back, glaring at the detective with bloodshot eyes.

"Who in the devil's name are you?" he growled, in a fury.

"No matter," said Nick sharply. "Drop that knife."

"Stand aside or I'll drop it between yer ribs!"

"Do you want to commit murder?"

"Curse you fer a meddler! I'll commit two murders if I have to."

He launched himself at Nick.

The detective promptly sidestepped, and met the on-

rush with a blow which must have given the ruffian the surprise of his life.

In a twinkling the fellow went down, lost his grip on the knife, and rolled over and over.

Nick picked up the dropped blade and was coolly eying it when the would-be murderer jumped to his feet.

The ruffian's head was ringing with the blow he had received, and he raved incoherently for a minute, then pulled a revolver from his hip pocket.

"Put up that gun, Ledyard!"

The command was given by a tall man who stepped suddenly around the ore heap.

He was tall, broad-shouldered, wore a wide-brimmed hat of white felt, and other garments of a theatrical-frontier sort.

His face was striking, intelligent, and handsome, and at the same time crafty and unscrupulous.

The stern command took all the tuck out of Ledyard.

His revolver hand fell nerveless at his side, and he recoiled a step.

"What are you trying to do?" asked the newcomer, his glance flashing from Ledyard to Nick.

"Not a blame thing, Nate," replied the ruffian, "'cept make Zolandy mind her p's an' q's. This hyer feller interfered an' it got my mad up."

"Zolandy?"

Nate looked around, and Nick followed the sweeping glance with his own eyes.

The old hag had recovered her wits and slipped away unnoticed.

"Sure," said Ledyard. "I met her here an' we had a tussle; she fought like a cat."

An expressive look passed between Nate and Ledyard. It did not escape Nick.

"And you interfered, did you?" demanded Nate, whirling about and taking Nick's measure with his eyes.

"Certainly I interfered," responded Nick. "I couldn't see the woman murdered before my eyes."

"You're Keene, the newspaper man, are you?"

"That's the name I go by. I'm here to write up——"

"I've been looking for you. You've got just fifteen minutes to make yourself absent from this camp, my man."

Nick returned the steady, suspicious stare of the foreman for a second.

"I won't need over ten," said he, and spun around on his heel and walked off.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THREE CASKETS.

Nick did not stand upon the order of his going, for the curt words and peremptory manner of the super left him no alternative, and to have protested would have been the height of folly.

If Nate Crosby did not already suspect the real cause of Nick's presence at the mine, to insist on remaining might have bred such a suspicion.

The super could not imagine that the detective was the redoubtable Nick Carter, for the Little Giant was supposed to be masquerading as the roustabout, Dave Jarvis.

If anything approaching the true state of affairs had entered Crosby's head, he must have imagined that the great detective was a confederate of the supposed roustabout.

At times like these, Nick had intuitions that impressed him as positively as plain facts themselves would have done.

And what he believed now was that Crosby, so far from suspecting his true character, merely disliked the idea of having a newspaper man probing around.

As the case stood at the mine, just then, a reporter might prove as undesirable as a detective.

But Nick had no intention of absenting himself very far from the Grubstake mill.

Whatever he did, he would keep in touch with the mill, and with Chick. For Chick's position was one of extreme peril, and Nick counted on being handily by in case of need.

Most unexpectedly, the assistant super came to the detective's relief.

The freight wagon, which had brought Crosby into camp, was backed up in front of the store, and Chick and the teamster were busy unloading it.

Chick gave Nick no attention whatever.

He undoubtedly saw him, but continued about his work without even a glance in his direction.

As Nick walked past the wagon, Clem Hendricks hurried out of the store and passed around to the rear, beckoning the detective to follow.

"Seen Crosby?" asked Hendricks, as soon as he and Nick were out of sight of those in front of the store.

"Yes."

"Got ordered out of camp?"

"He gave me fifteen minutes to make myself scarce."

"Ain't that a thunderin' how de do?" said Hendricks, with indignation. "Crosby is riled powerful, and combed me down good for allowin' you to stop. Don't know what in blazes ails him."

"I suppose I'll have to go," commented Nick, "but it's scurvy treatment."

"It's worse'n that, pard. But you don't go in no fifteen minutes. See that square, stone buildin' over the rise?"

Hendricks pointed.

"I see it," Nick answered.

"It's the old powder house. You go over an' stow yourself away in there. After a while I'll tote over some chuck and blankets. Early to-morrow mornin' I'll have a pony ready and you can slide out of camp like a gentleman."

"You're white from the ground up, Hendricks," said Nick.

"Ain't nuther. Just decent, that's all. The idee of turnin' you lose in these hills, fifty miles from nowhere, with nothin' under you but your feet. It's scandalous! Sneak for the powder house, pard. Take the cover of them hazels and no one'll see you. We ain't all heathens here, not by a durned sight."

Nick wrung the assistant super's horny hand and then vanished into the brush.

The old powder house was some ten feet square, inside measurement.

The walls were fully three feet thick and ran up to an arch which formed the roof.

A door of heavy oak stringers had once closed the entrance, but it was now off its hinges and leaning against the wall outside.

There was a heap of powder kegs in a rear corner, but the kegs were empty, as investigation showed.

Nick got behind the kegs and made himself as comfortable as he could.

Hardly had he screened himself when he heard the voice of Nate Crosby outside.

"The reason they're so heavy is because all three of 'em are lead lined. When you get 'em all into the powder house, lean the old door across the entrance."

Presently four men staggered in with a long square box between them; two of the men were Chick and the teamster.

Nick was hoping that Chick would be the last to leave, and that he could make his presence known to him, but Chick preceded the teamster on the way out.

In a few minutes another of the long boxes was brought in, and again Chick got away without affording Nick a chance to communicate with him.

A third box was brought in, and it was found necessary to move two of the kegs before the box could be placed alongside the others.

Chick was nearest, and he stepped to the kegs.

As he did so, he looked over the pile and saw Nick.

Chick did not know why his leader was in hiding, but he knew there must be a reason for it.

He moved the kegs, the box was shoved beside the others, and all four passed out.

"I've lost my knife some'rs," Nick heard Chick say, just outside the door. "I'll bet a bunch of dinero its back in that there powder house."

"Go an' look for it, then," said one of the men. "When you come out, fix the door like the super said."

"All right."

Chick came in quickly and halted at the barricade of kegs.

"What's up, Nick?" he asked, in a low tone.

"The super ordered me out of camp, and the assistant super sent me in here to spend the night. How's everything with you?"

"Easy. I'm on in the mill to-night. Crusher man laid off, and I take his place."

"What are those boxes?"

"Caskets."

"Caskets?"

"Sure. Crosby told the teamster that Riley and Kessler are to be taken up and sent to their friends."

"But there are three. What's the odd one for?"

"For me, I take it," said Chick grimly.

Nick climbed over the kegs, took a walk to the door, and looked out.

The three men who had helped Chick bring the caskets inside were nowhere to be seen.

"Coast is clear enough," said Chick. "Not much attention will be paid to me until the night shift is called. I'll miss my supper, but it won't be the first time."

"Where are Riley and Kessler buried?" Nick asked, sitting on one of the caskets.

"That's a conundrum."

"Conundrum?"

"So the teamster told me. He was quite talky whenever he got the chance, and I bowled him up a little whenever we stopped for a breathing spell."

"That's a good point," said Nick reflectively. "If the places where those detectives are buried is a conundrum, there's some reason for it."

"The teamster said that no more than three men in the camp knew where the detectives had been planted."

"Who are they?"

"Crosby himself and two of the amalgamators—one on the day gang and the other on the night shift."

"How does the teamster know that these three men are so well informed?"

"They took the bodies away."

Nick was thoughtful for a moment.

"The caskets are lead lined," he remarked.

"It's necessary to have them hermetically sealed."

"I understand."

"There's one more point, Nick."

"Out with it."

"The teamster told me that Crosby had spoken for his wagon and a fresh team for to-night."

"Ah!"

Nick stepped to the door and took another look.

The coast was still clear.

Coming back, he took from his pocket a little instrument he always carried: a combination knife, with small tools closing into the handle.

Opening the screw-driver attachment, he set hurriedly to work removing the lid of one of the boxes.

Chick helped, and, in a few moments, the top was lifted off, revealing a plain black coffin, large enough for a giant.

The top of the casket was then removed, and two important discoveries were made.

First, the casket was not "lead lined."

And, second, the weight of a lead lining was secured by a number of pieces of scrap iron.

"These caskets figure in the game," said Nick.

"But how?" asked the puzzled Chick.

"I'll find out. Help me with this iron."

The scrap was all removed and hidden away behind the pile of kegs.

Picking up a small stick, perhaps an inch square, Nick broke off four pieces.

Again he reassured himself by a look from the door.

"I'll get into that casket," he said, "for it's a certainty that Crosby has borrowed the teamster's wagon to carry this outfit of coffins away somewhere during the night. I don't weigh quite so much as the scrap iron, but I don't think the difference in weight will be noticed."

Nick pulled off his coat.

"You'll smother in there," said Chick.

"These four pieces of wood are to be put under the coffin lid when you screw it down."

Nick rolled up his coat and placed it at the head of the casket for a pillow.

Then he got in, stretched himself out, and found that he had room to spare.

"Lively now, old man," he said. "It would never do to be interrupted at this stage. Two screws will tack the lid in place. Leave it so I can break out if I have to."

"You'll have a hot time of it," muttered Chick.

"Not so hot a time as I expect to give them, later."

"If they find you out——"

"There'll be only three, and three's not so many."

As they talked, Chick was working swiftly.

The inch-square pieces of wood were laid on the rim of the casket; then the cover was laid over them and fastened with two screws. In this way a crack an inch wide was left all around the casket for air.

"If the assistant super brings the chuck and the blankets," came the muffled tones of Nick, "he'll think I was scared out when you fellows brought these long boxes in here."

The cover of the box was of three boards, held together by two crosspieces.

There were spaces between the boards, and through these spaces air would get into the box, thence through the crack around the casket lid, and so to Nick.

But the detective would have a sweltering time of it, at best.

"I can't fasten the box cover on with more than two screws," said Chick. "If you want to get out, you'll have two lids to break off."

"Two screws will be enough to hold the box cover."

"But if Crosby sees that the other screws are gone, he'll suspect the box has been tampered with."

"We'll have to take chances on that. The boxes will be removed at night, and the darkness won't render a very close observation possible."

Chick lifted on the cover and drove two screws "home" midway of the casket length, where it would be possible for Nick, in case of need, to get a better purchase on the cover.

"All done, old chap," said Chick, his lips to a crack in the cover.

Just then a shrill whistle resounded through the camp.

"What's that?" came the faint question from the man in the inner box.

"The stamp mill is sounding the call for the night shift."

"Then away with you, Chick. This is to be a night of events, so keep a weather eye out for storm signals."

"Sure. Good-by and good luck."

"Same to you."

Chick left, and Nick began his long and uncomfortable wait.

The casket was large enough so he could twist himself about, thus changing his position and easing the strain on his tired muscles.

But it was insufferably hot in the narrow quarters, and the supply of fresh air so limited that it was none too good at any time.

Two hours passed, as Nick judged, and some one came in.

"Keene!" called a voice. "Hello, there, pard?"

It was the assistant super.

Nick heard him, but, of course, could give no response.

"Blast it all!" muttered Hendricks, after stumbling around over the caskets. "He's not here—got scared out, I reckon;" and the assistant super went away.

Then, after three hours more, as Nick reckoned the time, the long box was suddenly picked up and borne away.

No sound of voice or movement accompanied the action.

Crosby's plans, whatever they were, were fully understood, and that part of them was being carried out in strictest silence.

The great detective was away on his midnight trip, and his satisfaction was great indeed, for he expected much from that nocturnal journey.

CHAPTER V.

ZOLANDY'S "LOCO" MIXTURE.

Chick was in the powder house with Nick during the time he was supposed to be eating his supper.

There were two rooms where the Grubstake miners and mill men ate their meals, and Chick might have been supposed to be in either one or the other.

So, if his absence was noticed by Crosby, or the teamster, or the few who knew him by sight, no comment was occasioned.

The new crusher man joined the throng pouring from the boarding house.

There were two night shifts: one of four men in the mill, and another of at least twenty in the underground workings of the mine.

At a certain point the two shifts separated, Chick and three others making for the mill and the larger party moving off toward the main shaft house.

Chick knew where he was to go, and, on reaching the mill, he climbed the rough ladder to the ore platform.

His companions passed on and entered the mill at the back through the engine room.

The night engineer relieved the day man, and the night amalgamators—one of whom was Ledyard—relieved the two who had worked out their shift.

The crusher man was on the ore platform, and he gave way to Chick.

He offered to show Chick a few things about the work, but Chick already had had them explained to him.

He thanked the man, and the latter went away.

The ore haulers had deposited more than enough ore for the night run on the platform, and Chick began throwing it into the crusher.

The crusher was set into the wall of the mill, so that it could be fed from the ore platform on the outside, while the broken ore, suitable to be fed into the battery hoppers, ran out on the feed loft inside.

It was Chick's duty to keep the self-feeding hoppers full up with broken ore.

After a couple of tons had been broken, he climbed down into the feed loft.

A huge kerosene lamp, suspended from the roof of the mill, lighted the loft, and under this light Chick found Nate Crosby standing, watching him with sharp, beady eyes.

How long the super had been there, Chick had no means of knowing.

As the position afforded Crosby a view of the ore platform, the detective surmised that he had been there watching ever since Chick had arrived.

"You go about this just as though you knew how, Jarvis," remarked Crosby.

Chick, after giving the super a curt nod, had picked up a shovel and began pushing crushed ore into battery one.

At the edge of the feed loft were twenty dancing stamp stems, and at the lower end of each stem was an eight-hundred-and-fifty-pound stamp.

The lamplight glittered on the polished steel stems, and as they were lifted and dropped the roar was terrific.

In order to talk and be understood, the super had to pitch his voice in a very high key.

Chick did not try to give the super an oral answer. He simply nodded, once more, and went on with his work.

Crosby watched him, a sinister light in his black eyes and a forbidding look on his crafty face.

Chick, seemingly absorbed in his labor, could have whirled and put a bullet through the super's heart at the very first sign of treachery.

The detective was expecting something to happen, and did not intend to be taken at a disadvantage.

After a few moments Crosby walked over to one corner of the feed loft where there was a bucket on a shelf with a tin dipper hanging above it.

He took a drink, climbed up to the ore platform, descended to the ground, and there ejected from his mouth the draft taken from the dipper, and went away.

Chick dropped the shovel, got down on his knees, and crept stealthily between the dancing stems of batteries one and two.

Three feet beyond the line of stamp stems the feed loft broke away abruptly, with neither guard rope nor rail, and Chick could look down on the plates and two night amalgamators.

Chick did not expect to see the amalgamators engaged in robbery, for he did not see how the plates could be rifled unless the stamps were first "hung up"—that is, put out of operation.

If this were done, and the flow of water turned off, amalgam could be scraped from the plates and the battery started up again.

Just then, however, every battery was in operation.

Ledyard stood at the battery timbers, examining something in the rays of a lamp suspended over the aisle between batteries three and four.

To Chick it looked like a long silver wire, from which bulky ornaments of silver were dangling.

After a moment's examination, the amalgamator withdrew into the darkness under the feed loft at the rear of the battery boxes.

The detective turned and crept back, and a moment later he was busy shoveling, when Ledyard's companion came up the steep stairs from the body of the mill, walked to the water bucket, and made a pretense of drinking.

He was an evil-looking rascal, and Chick was fully as much on his guard against him as he was against the super.

In the detective's pockets were two revolvers ready for instant and desperate use.

The amalgamator gave little attention to Chick but went downstairs again, drawing his sleeve across his lips.

Feeling thirsty himself, Chick dropped his shovel and went over and took a drink.

There was a slightly acrid taste to the water, but Chick thought nothing of this, as most of the drinking water in that part of the country was tinged with mineral in the mountains.

Chick returned to his labor, and in a few minutes Ledyard came up, walked to the bucket, lifted the empty dipper to his lips, and seemingly took a long drink.

The engineer was the only one who didn't appear to have an overwhelming thirst.

Chick did not know it, but the engineer had his own drinking supply in the engine room.

Before the amalgamator went away, Chick stepped over and gave him a playful poke with the handle of the shovel.

"What the blazes you doin' that fur?" shouted Ledyard.

"Wanted to find out whether you were real or only a dummy, Chick laughed hilariously.

Ledyard wore a tuft of chin whiskers, and the detective reached out and gave them a pull.

"B-a-a!" he chuckled.

Ledyard's right shot out in the direction of Chick's head.

Chick countered in a flash and knocked the amalgamator into the stamps of battery one.

Then, as though nothing had happened, the detective went over and took another drink.

The water did not seem to quench his thirst, and he took two dippers of it.

Strange to relate, Ledyard did not continue the fight, but picked himself up and hurried down to where the other amalgamator was standing.

"He's hit the bucket twice, Perkins," Ledyard called into his comrade's ear.

"Bully!" returned Perkins. "How's the loco workin'?"

"The bees are in his bonnet, all right. The famous Nick Carter'll go the way of the other two."

"Sure! Carter, or any other dub, can't go up against Crosby an' win out. You hear me?"

"Keep a watch on the cuss. He's got a fist like a pile driver, and, if he comes at you, lay him out with a crowbar, and do it quick."

"Bet yer life."

Up in the feed loft Chick was having a song and dance all by himself.

Occasionally he would stop to shy pieces of ore at the stems, for they looked to him like dancing devils, and he wanted to knock them out.

Now and then a lucid interval flashed over him, and he would clutch his head with both hands and wonder what was the matter.

A flash of reason—the last he remembered—came to him as he was about to take another drink.

Then, dropping the dipper, he raised the bucket and threw it out on the ore platform with all his strength.

The next instant darkness again closed in on him, and in a quarter of an hour he was fairly raving, and Nate Crosby and the two amalgamators came running up the stairs from the bottom of the mill, all armed with bludgeons and Crosby carrying a rope.

"Nab him!" shouted the super.

To give the order was one thing, and to carry it out another.

With a furious yell Chick drew his revolvers and began firing.

But he did not shoot at the three men.

He saw a whole army of devils coming for him, and he shot at them, his bullets going in every direction.

For fear of being struck by the chance shots, Crosby and the amalgamators got behind battery timbers and waited.

With a terrific yell, Chick broke for the ore platform, sprang out, and leaped wildly from the planks—a furious plunge of fifteen feet straight into the darkness.

Making hurriedly for the platform, the three conspirators stood there and watched and listened while the frenzied shouts died away in the distance.

"He's heading for the cliff and the open shafts," observed Crosby. "The crazy fool will go the way of the other two, and Zolandy's loco mixture has again stood us in good stead."

"If it hadn't been for that cursed reporter," growled Ledyard, "Zolandy would have mixed her last dose of loco."

"I have a supply of it," said Crosby. "The hag knows too much, and you are to follow out your orders in regard to her at the earliest possible moment."

"Give her a dose of her own loco," suggested Perkins.

"'Twon't do—she has an antidote."

"Mebby she'd be too crazy to use the antidote."

"A knife is the best loco for her. I'll want you to-night, Ledyard. Perkins will have to care for all the batteries till morning, but I'll send on the regular crusher man to take the place of that fool detective."

"What's on to-night?" asked Ledyard.

"You'll know later. At midnight, get the freighter's wagon and a fresh team of bronks from the stable. Drive to the old powder house and drive easy."

"Kerrect."

Ledyard and Perkins went back into the body of the mill, and the crafty super hastened to the office.

In half an hour one of the amalgamators on the day shift, a brother of Perkins, was waiting at the stable to help Ledyard, and the other was mounted on a swift horse and riding toward Helena with a note for Dalrymple.

The note was brief but important.

"DAL: The great N. C. has met his finish. Go to the doctor and get three death certificates: one for Jarvis, a second for Kessler, and the third for Riley. They'll be tacked on the boxes containing the remains. Don't worry about the stuff. It will be marketed O. K.

"NATE."

The super would not have felt so jubilant, as he made his way to the powder house on the stroke of twelve, if he had been better informed.

Still, the outlook was bad enough for the Carters, and it was destined to become worse.

CHAPTER VI.

A HORRIBLE FATE.

From the motion of the box alone Nick could tell with a fair degree of certainty what was being done with him.

Every step of the bearers, walking together, gave an end-long oscillating movement to the casket and box.

He counted the steps for lack of anything better to do.

Twenty-five.

Then a halt, a lifting upward, and a jolt as the head end of the casket was dropped on the other boxes in the wagon.

After that a shove forward.

"All right," said a muffled voice.

"Sit on the top box, Ledyard," came the voice of Nate Crosby, instantly recognized by Nick. "Don't untie those infernal bronks, Perkins, till I get on the seat and have a good grip on the lines. They're as hard to hold as a couple of devils."

"Why didn't you take a span o' mules?" queried the voice of Ledyard, as its owner climbed up and sat on the top box.

"The mules have been to Helena to-day and were played out. All right, Perkins?"

"All right!"

"Then get up on the seat here with me."

The wagon got under way with a jump that jarred the load.

For a minute the bronchos were at a run, and it took both Perkins and Crosby to draw them down to a slower pace.

It was a terribly hard minute for Nick, for the wagon bumped over the stones, and, stretched out as he was, the detective could not brace himself to resist the jolting.

At last the horses were quieted, and a squeak, squeak, squeak, came from one of the hubs at regular intervals.

"This wagon hasn't been oiled since its trip to Helena," thought Nick. "We'll have a hot box here if we're not careful."

He fell to counting the number of squeaks, and a little problem presented itself to his mind.

Every rotation of the wheel made a squeak, and if he kept tab on the number he could figure out the distance the wagon traveled from the mine.

The rear wheels were larger than the front ones, and the sound came from the front. Therefore it followed that if he had the diameter of the front wheel——

Something else of more importance claimed his attention, at that moment, and he did not try to keep the count.

The wagon was now safely out of camp, and the men were talking.

"Now that the loco has done for Nick Carter," said Crosby, talking for the benefit of Ledyard, who was in the rear of the wagon box, "we can bring this graft to a successful finish."

"Goin' to wind it up, Nate?" asked Ledyard.

"Yes, right away."

"Thunder! It's too good a thing to pass up."

"We've hogged it clear to the limit, Ledyard. The stockholders down East are waking up, and, if we don't shut off, they'll never rest until they nail us. To-night sees our last hocus-pocus with the wires and disks. We'll market the stuff, make a glean get-away—and there you are."

"It's dead easy," grumbled Ledyard, "an' I hate ter throw up the deal."

"Don't be a fool! Nick Carter has got more friends than Riley and Kessler had, and when it's known back East that he was fixed, the sleuths will be on our trail good and proper. Now's the time for us to wind up everything and clear out. Confound that off bronk! He shies at every bush we pass."

"How's the stuff to be marketed?"

"Trust me for that."

The ride was continued in silence for a while and Nick's thoughts were far from agreeable.

What had happened to Chick? Was he really down and out, as these villains implied?

While the detective was turning the matter over in his mind, the wagon gave a tremendous lurch forward, and startled oaths broke from the scoundrelly trio.

"Stop 'em!" roared Ledyard. "Stop 'em!"

This way and that the wagon swayed, bumping along at frightful speed.

The breath was all but jolted out of Nick's body, and he could form some estimate of the speed at which they were traveling by the rousing clatter of the iron-shod hoofs.

"Great Jupiter!" cried Crosby; "one of the lines is broken! Jump! We're bound to have a smash-up, and we'll be killed if we don't jump!"

Sounds followed indicative of the fact that the three men had thrown themselves from the wagon.

Nick had no intention of going it alone, in that fashion, and was on the point of breaking out, when something happened which saved him the trouble.

The forward wheels struck a rock too big for them to climb.

Something had to give way, and it chanced to be the iron pin that held the whiffletrees to the tongue.

The jar caused by the sudden stop hurled the top box over the side of the wagon.

When it struck ground, Nick was banked about in the casket like a shot in a rattle box.

He was also badly bruised, but that was not the worst of it.

Wrenched by the fall from the wagon, the cover was burst off the box and the lid came off the casket, so that Nick, half stunned and almost helpless, rolled out of his narrow quarters under the eyes of his three enemies.

Crosby, Ledyard, and Perkins were standing close together, having but just gained the ground when the wagon was wrecked.

There was a bright moon and no shadows of hills or trees, and their surprise on seeing the detective pop out of the long box can be imagined better than described.

Startled oaths broke from all three.

"It's that infernal reporter I ordered out of camp!" cried the super.

"What was he doin' in that box?" asked Ledyard.

"No matter," flung back Crosby fiercely. "Nail him!"

All three men hurled themselves toward Nick.

Although in no condition to put up a very game fight, Nick was yet resolved not to yield without a desperate struggle.

Summoning every ounce of muscle to his aid, he sprang erect.

Crosby was close, and aimed a blow with his fist.

Nick ducked, came up under the super's guard, caught him around the body under the shoulders, and hurled him back against Perkins.

If the detective had been in usual trim, his wonderful strength by that move would have put both men out of the running, but he was lamed and bruised, and unable to do his best.

Perkins was carried down by the impact of Crosby's body, but Crosby himself kept his feet.

Ledyard, meanwhile, had stolen up from the rear.

Nick heard him in time to turn, dodge a blow, and give Ledyard his compliments a second time in the course of their brief acquaintance.

This turning, while it enabled Nick to take care of Ledyard, yet placed him at the mercy of the super.

The latter suddenly caught Nick about the arms from behind.

A fierce struggle followed, and the detective could have slipped free had not the other two ruffians come to their leader's aid.

A couple of murderous blows on the head rendered Nick helpless.

He sank to his knees and, becoming unconscious, crumpled up in a heap on the rocks.

When again able to understand the drift of affairs, his arms were behind him, secured with a pair of his own handcuffs.

His feet were secured at the ankles with a halter strap, and Crosby stood over him, wielding his revolvers.

"Thought you'd come around, eh?" grunted the super.

"Better to come this way than go the other," Nick answered laconically.

"You'll go the other, quick enough."

"It isn't on the cards that I go from Montana, to-night."

"We'll see. What sort of a reporter are you, anyway, to go around with handcuffs, and shooters, and a choice collection of other hardware?"

"You'll have to draw your own conclusions, Crosby."

"I've drawn 'em. You're here to help Carter, but Carter, by this time, is where he can't be helped by you or any one else."

"You never can tell about Carter."

"Bah! Carter was never steered into a bunch like this before, and he was easy—for us."

In spite of his perilous situation, Nick felt an inclination to smile at the super's conceit.

Despite his confidence in Chick, however, Nick was worried about him; more worried than he was about himself.

"Don't brag until you're out of the timber," suggested Nick.

The detective's calm words and unruffled manner seemed to infuriate the super.

"You pack a good deal of nerve, but it won't help you."

Crosby turned to Ledyard.

"Gag him!" he said curtly.

The amalgamator twisted a handkerchief between Nick's jaws and knotted it at the back of his head.

"Put him back in the casket," was the super's next order. "Perkins, lend a hand."

The two ruffians picked the detective up, head and feet, and laid him back in his former position.

Nick's coat was thrown out on the ground, having evidently been searched.

"Make him comfortable," said Crosby, with a diabolical smile. "Roll up the coat again and put it under his head."

Ledyard carried out the command in silence.

It was plain that Ledyard liked the work, for he was getting even with Nick for the score he had run up during the afternoon.

"Put on the cover," commanded the super. "If you can't find screws for the lid, get some nails out of the wagon and slip 'em into the screw holes."

This was done.

"We won't need to put the casket into the box again," Nick heard Crosby say. "Get those two reatas from the wagon, Ledyard, and bring them to me."

"All right, Nate."

Next the casket echoed hollowly under a kick from Crosby's boot.

"Here's a problem for you to work on, Mr. Detective," came the ironical tones of Crosby. "Figure out what we're going to do with you."

Nick had no response to make, nor could he have made one if he had wanted to.

Crosby's suggestion was not needed, for he was already "figuring."

Duty had brought him face to face with death in so many forms and so many times that the horrors of his present situation were borne calmly. He could imagine the fate that was to be meted out to him, and his mind was never so busy as then.

If the come-alongs had been in front of him, he could have slipped them readily; but they were behind, and he was lying on his wrists—a condition which made the feat difficult if not impossible.

Nevertheless, he worked for all he was worth.

"Get shovels, Perkins," he heard Crosby order.

Then, in a moment, the super went on:

"I'll take the shovels and the rope. You two tote the box over onto that flat, among the trees, where the ground is not so stony and the digging easier."

The casket was lifted and carried for perhaps fifty feet, and then it was set down again.

"Now, then, dig," said Crosby, "and make the hole good and deep."

The ring of spades and the sound of falling earth reached Nick's ears.

He redoubled his efforts to free himself, and so hard did he labor that the sweat started on his forehead.

Breathing was difficult, for the air in the casket was not of the best, and was getting more impure with every moment.

A little fresh air came in, for the nails could not hold the lid as tightly as the screws would have done, and there were small spaces through which air could enter.

Nick felt the blood from his bruised wrists flowing down over his fingers.

But this was a help, for it enabled the handcuffs to slip more easily over his hands.

"All ready, Nate," said Ledyard.

"Slip one of the ropes under the head of the casket," returned Crosby.

By a movement of one end of the narrow box Nick knew that this had been done.

"Now slip the other rope under the other end."

This also was done.

"You two catch that front rope at each end and walk on either side of the hole. I'll manage this rope here."

The casket was raised, pendulous and swinging in the rope loops, and borne ahead for a little more than its own length.

"Lower away, easy! Make it as comfortable for him as we can; the better he realizes his position the more it will please me."

"A devil incarnate!" thought Nick, and redoubled his efforts to slip the cuffs.

Those steel bracelets stood between him and life or death. After ridding himself of them he would have to take a desperate chance, but better a bullet than the living death they had planned for him.

Down he went, slowly, until, with a slight jar, the casket brought up at the bottom of the pit.

"Now, then, to work with the shovels."

Earth began clumping down on the casket lid—hollow sounds that all but drove the last forlorn hope from the detective's heart.

He was freeing one hand of the come-alongs, but success might come only after so much earth was heaped upon him that escape would prove impossible.

Suddenly a wild, unearthly cry came out of the night.

The earth ceased falling, and there was silence about the brink of the shallow pit.

The cry was repeated; this time it was nearer.

It was repeated a third time, nearer still.

Muttered oaths reached Nick's ears; then the frantic yell came from almost over him, followed by sounds indicative of wild disorder.

Shots echoed out spitefully, a thump of blows, and then the frenzied cries retreating and running feet following, all fading away in the distance.

Just at that moment the detective freed his left hand of the handcuffs, and brought both bleeding hands around in front of him.

To sit up, pushing the lid away as he did so, required but a moment; and to unstrap his feet and tear away the gag took but a moment longer.

He stood up.

Twenty feet away in the gloom, he saw dusky figures returning.

The top of the hole was shoulder high, and he cleared it at a jump, making at once for the timbered depths that stretched to the right—a direction opposite to that from which his enemies were approaching.

"There he goes!" shouted Crosby. "Shoot him! Don't let him escape!"

A crack of revolvers rang out.

The detective ran like a deer for cover, well knowing that it would be suicide, unarmed as he was, to face the trio of desperate scoundrels.

They could have their innings now, and he would have his later.

The first volley whistled past him, a twitch of his shirt sleeve showing how near one of the bullets had come.

Another volley was fired, Nick's white shirt presenting a fair target against the dark background of brush that lay ahead, but every shot of the second fusillade flew wild.

Just as the pursued detective leaped for the shelter of the chaparral, the third and last volley rang out and he felt a numbing pain at the side of his temple.

Yet he did not slacken speed.

Through the timber he raced, stumbling and falling, but always picking himself up and continuing on.

Presently his strength began to fail him, for the wound was telling on him, and he knew it.

With dogged persistence, however, he hung on, and his staggering leaps carried him farther and farther forward.

At last his ears began to ring beneath his pounding heartbeats, a black screen dropped over his eyes, and he pitched over a log, gave one final convulsive movement, and then stretched out and lay motionless and silent.

He had made a game fight for his freedom, one against three, and he had won.

Friends were at hand to give him their attention; friends with whom he had never spoken, two whom he had never seen and one whom he had seen but once.

Yet he had befriended the one whom he had seen, and this debt was to be then and there repaid.

CHAPTER VII.

LOCATING THE GRAFT.

On opening his eyes, the detective found himself lying on a floor on a pile of bear skins.

A piece of twisted cloth, swimming in a bowl of grease, gave a sputtering light from a table in one corner.

All about the small room the shadows hung heavily.

Something crouched at Nick's left, but whether it was man, woman, or beast he could not tell. Nor had he much desire, just then, to investigate.

His brain began to whirl, and he put up a hand to his head, and found that there was a bandage there.

He started to raise himself, and the form arose—a misshapen form it was, with a cadaverous face half concealed in a tangle of long gray hair.

Skinny, talonlike fingers were laid on him, and they pushed him back, gently but firmly.

He resisted a moment, then yielded.

The form, dropping to its knees, leaned over him and peered down in his face.

"Feel better, huh?"

"I don't think I ever felt much worse."

"You got um senses. You know, you understand, huh? You see, you hear?"

"Yes."

"Heap better."

The hag gave a satisfied grunt.

"Who are you?"

"Me Zolandy. You save um Zolandy's life. Make um Zolandy your friend."

She turned her head toward the door.

"Hatch-a-taw!" she called.

A form started up from somewhere in the gloom; a sinewy form, bare to the loins, erect, and with skin shining like copper in the dim light.

Zolandy spoke a few words in an unknown tongue, and the form vanished only to reappear presently with a bowl.

The bowl was handed to the old woman, who turned again to Nick.

"You drink," said Zolandy; "then in one sleep you feel um heap better."

The detective, sure that the hag knew very well what she was about, lifted himself and drained the bitter dose contained in the bowl.

"You sleep, now," said Zolandy, pushing him back.

Almost immediately Nick's eyes closed, and he dropped away into deep slumber.

When he awoke it was daylight, and Zolandy still crouched beside him.

He sat up, and, looking around, found himself in a log house containing one room.

There was a single window to the east, through which the sunlight was streaming, and a door in the wall opposite the window.

In one end was a rude fireplace, in which a fire was blazing.

A black tin coffeepot simmered near the coals, and the sizzle of frying bacon filled the room.

The smell of the bacon and coffee set Nick to thinking that he had had no supper the night before, and, so far, no breakfast.

"Hungry?" asked the woman.

Nick nodded.

"Wait. Me fix um breakfus'."

The woman got up, gave her crooked body a shake, and went about getting the food on the table.

"You come," she said, at last.

The detective arose to his feet and was surprised to find how completely his strength had returned.

Whether it was the sleep, or Zolandy's drugs, or both, he could not tell.

He ate in silence, Zolandy watching him keenly.

When he had disposed of all the food in sight, he pushed away from the table.

"Where did you find me, Zolandy?" he asked.

"In the chaparral."

"How did you come to find me there?"

"Me chase um crazy man with Hatch-a-taw an' Waukon. Hear guns. We stop. You come, fall close by where we stand. We bring you here. You enemy of Crosby's?"

"You may call me that after this. You say you were chasing a crazy man?"

"Yes. Him locoed."

"Do you have many locoed men around here?"

She held up three skinny fingers.

"So many," she said.

"Did you see this last man?"

"No see um; hear um."

Nick wanted to find out what the last "locoed" man looked like, and learn if he was really Chick.

"What did you want to find him for, Zolandy?"

A crafty gleam shot through the hag's bleared eyes.

"Me save um life; give um medicine to make um well."

"Why do you want to save him? You gave him the loco in the first place?"

"Me give um loco to Crosby." A look of demoniacal hate contorted her wrinkled face. "Crosby he try to kill Zolandy; Zolandy save man Crosby try to kill."

Nick had heard of the "loco weed."

On the ranges it is frequently eaten by cattle, and causes them to go mad.

Boiled down and its essence secured, it is a powerful poison, bringing first madness and then death.

"How long before the loco mixture will kill a man?" Nick asked.

"One week," replied the hag. "Meybe if him strong, two weeks."

There was hope for Chick yet.

Nick arose.

"You have two men here, Zolandy?"

"Yes."

"I want them to help me find this crazy man. He's a friend of mine, and his life must be saved."

"Him friend o' yours?" the woman returned, with sudden interest.

"Yes."

"We find um," she said, with alacrity, "and we save um, too. He 'round here—been round here long time—since midnight. Me call um Hatch-a-taw and Waukon."

She started for the door.

Before she reached it, a form blocked the entrance.

Nick started back in amazement, for the newcomer was none other than Chick.

He was bare-headed, his clothes were torn, his face scratched, his eyes bloodshot and glowing with a frenzied light, and in his right hand he clutched a double-edged bowie knife, the steel reddened with blood.

As he stood in the doorway, glaring at the two in the room, he presented a horrible sight.

Nick, the instant the shock occasioned by his assistant's unexpected appearance was over, took a step forward.

His hands were swollen and lame from his struggle to free himself from the handcuffs, but he knew that if he saved Chick he must call up all his reserve strength, and, if possible, use strategy as well as force.

When he had wakened from his sleep, in the morning, he had found the empty handcuff dangling from his right wrist.

The key, fortunately, had not been taken from his vest by Crosby during the search of the detective's pockets.

So, with his left hand, Nick had unlocked the cuffs and laid them beside the heap of skins on the floor.

Now, with his eyes on Chick, he stepped back to the handcuffs and picked them up.

If he could he would get them about Chick's wrists and so hold him while Zolandy administered the antidote.

Chick stood in the entrance for several seconds, the hag slinking away from him in terror and calling wildly for her red servants.

Zolandy's screeching yell aroused the crazed detective, and he sprang at her with knife uplifted.

The woman dodged, but was not quick enough.

A wild laugh broke from Chick's lips; he raised the knife in air, and it would have fallen but for Nick.

The latter jumped forward, caught the upraised arm, and wrenched away the knife.

Chick turned, threw his arms about his leader, and they fell to the floor in a struggle.

It was no easy task to turn Chick on his back, but Nick succeeded, and held his assistant's wrists while Zolandy snapped on the cuffs.

Hatch-a-taw and Waukon came running in, and, with a thong of deer hide, secured Chick's feet.

While this was being done, Zolandy was taking a bottle from a cupboard and pouring its contents into a bowl.

Zolandy and Nick forced the liquid down Chick's throat, and presently he ceased his struggles and lay quietly, as though asleep.

"Take um off," said Zolandy, pointing to the handcuffs and the thong of buckskin. "No danger. Him be all right when him wakes up."

The fastenings were removed, Chick was lifted to the pile of furs, and Nick sat down beside him.

"Poor old chap," he thought, "he got what was coming to me."

Even at that, however, Nick thought he would rather have Chick's end of it than the experience that had fallen to him.

Chick's coat was buttoned, and, as he was breathing heavily, Nick unbuttoned it in order to give his lungs free play.

As the coat fell open, a coil of silver wire with pendent disks fell out.

A muttered exclamation escaped Nick's lips.

Picking up the strange contrivance, he passed to the table, seated himself, and began an examination.

As he studied the wire and the disks his countenance cleared.

The Indians, standing beside the door like bronze statues, and the hag, crouching and mumbling by the fireplace, watched him wonderingly.

Nick got up and possessed himself of the bowie knife which he had torn from Chick's hand.

The knife was a homemade affair, and had been manufactured from a flat file, ground down and set in a common wood handle.

Two letters were rudely cut into the handle, presumably the initials of the owner.

The initials were "J. P."

"Zolandy," said Nick.

"What um want?" asked the hag.

"Who are the night amalgamators in the mill, do you know? Ledyard and——"

"Perkins."

"James Perkins?"

"Jim Perkins."

Nick laid the knife beside the wire and the disks.

"I'll call these exhibits A and B," he thought. "The mystery of that graft at the Grubstake mill is a mystery no longer."

In an hour Chick started to a sitting posture on the heap of skins, brushing his hand wildly across his face.

"Daylight," he muttered. "Why, what's—what's become of the mill? Where am I?"

Reason had returned to Chick, as his words gave ample evidence.

"You're all right, my boy," said Nick.

"That you, Nick?" asked the astonished detective.

"It happens to be."

Chick got to his feet and looked himself over in a bewildered way.

"I look as though I had been playing tag with a cyclone," he remarked.

"That's no joke," smiled Nick.

Chick's eyes fell on the silver wire and the disks.

"Why," he cried, "there it is, now!"

"You remember it, do you?"

"I remember seeing it in the hands of one of the amalgamators."

"Don't you remember getting hold of it and putting it inside your coat?"

A blank look overspread Chick's face.

"No."

"Well, that's where it was. You brought it here with you about two hours ago."

"Then I did a pretty good piece of work while I was off my trolley," Chick muttered.

"You're right, it was a fine piece of work. It lays bare the whole graft."

Chick opened his eyes.

"I don't see how."

"I do," returned Nick. "Do you remember anything about the knife?"

"Did I bring that, too?" asked Chick.

"Yes; and would have used it if you had had the chance."

Chick heaved a deep breath.

"It looks as though I had used it. Where did I get it? that's the question. I've been doing a lot of things that I don't know anything about."

"What you've done has been right in line with our investigations. What is the last thing you remember?"

"The last thing I remember is going to a water bucket and helping myself. The more I drank the more I wanted and the hazier everything became."

"I'm surprised at you, Chick."

"I'm surprised at myself, now. But Crosby himself, and both amalgamators, went through the motions of drinking from the same bucket, and I wasn't expecting the lightning to strike me from that quarter."

"Tell me what happened."

Chick did so, briefly and concisely.

"Are there two mill men by the name of Perkins?" Nick asked, when his assistant had finished.

"Yes," replied Chick, "they're brothers. One is on the day shift and the other on the night shift."

"Here's what you did, Chick: You ran from the mill. Ledyard left Jim Perkins to run the batteries and took the other Perkins and went with Crosby on that night trip with the caskets.

"You came back to the mill, found Jim Perkins alone, and looking at his wires and disks.

"You made an attack on Perkins. He drew his knife, you got it away from him, turned his own bowie against him, and escaped with the contrivance on the table there."

"That's it. But what kind of a contrivance is that, anyhow?"

"I'll show you."

Nick cleaned the bowie knife, sat down at the table, and began scraping each of the dangling disks.

They were heavily encrusted with a substance which resembled frosted silver.

This substance Nick placed in an empty dish.

When the disks were scraped clean, they were seen to be of copper.

The scraping finished, Nick molded the substance into a ball the size of a coconut and placed it on the table top.

"Amalgam," he said.

"Where did it come from?" inquired Chick.

"Where copper disks were coated with quicksilver and suspended in the battery box, catching the best of the gold before it flowed out over the plates."

"By Jupiter! Then that's the reason fifteen thousand dollars' worth of ore goes into the mill hoppers every two weeks and only five thousand dollars' worth comes out of the battery boxes!"

"That's it; ten thousand dollars' worth of gold is taken before it has a chance to reach the plates. It's a great graft, and the four amalgamators, Crosby, and Dalrymple, are all in it.

"What we want to find out is whether this gold is retorted and marketed as bullion or in its present form as amalgam.

"As amalgam it would be from five to ten times the bulk of bullion, and heavier proportionately.

"What is it, Zolandy?"

The hag, her bleared eyes gleaming with unwonted fire, had approached and touched Nick's elbow.

"Crosby has got um loco from Zolandy," she said. "No got use for Zolandy any more; 'fraid Zolandy tell. Him try to kill me. But I know much; Hatch-a-taw and Waukon they find out more than Crosby knows. You understand?"

Nick nodded gravely.

"You come with me," Zolandy went on.

"Where you going?" asked Nick.

"You see."

"Our cue is to follow her, Nick," said Chick. "She's got something up her sleeve, and it's important."

"Of course; but you've got to have something to eat before we start out."

Chick saw the wisdom of the suggestion, and Zolandy got ready some food.

After that the old woman guided them through the hills to a dugout in the mountainside, four or five miles from her own cabin.

The dugout was concealed by brush and trees, and any one not knowing of its existence would have passed it by without seeing it.

"Crosby go there much," whispered Zolandy. "Him bad. What him do there, Zolandy no can tell. Jim Perkins, Eph Perkins, and Ledyard go there, too."

"We'll have a look into the place," said Nick, "but I know what it was used for before we investigate."

Parting the brush, he stepped to the door of the dugout and listened, Chick following him closely.

Hearing nothing to indicate that the dugout was occupied, Nick caught the latch.

Contrary to his expectations, the door yielded.

The instant he flung it open, he whirled, caught Chick by the shoulders, and bore him to the ground.

As he did so the sharp report of a revolver rang out, and a bullet whistled through the air above their heads.

But for Nick's quick move the bullet would have found a mark.

CHAPTER VIII.

RIFLED GRAVES.

Only one shot was fired, for before the marksman could shoot again, Nick was upon him.

This man had been the sole occupant of the dugout, and he was lying on a bunk in one corner, raised on his left elbow, and manipulating his revolver with his right hand.

The upper half of his body was covered with a flannel shirt, and about his breast, over the flannel, was a broad, blood-stained bandage.

Nick was but half a moment in disarming the fellow and in appropriating a second revolver which lay on a box near the cot.

The weapons the detective slipped into his trousers' pockets.

"Jim Perkins!" exclaimed Chick.

Perkins was staring at Chick in a daze.

"You—you——" the thief muttered, in a bewildered tone.

"Surprised to see me in my right mind, are you?" asked Chick.

The thief's startled gaze wandered to Zolandy, who had also entered the dugout, and then he jumped to the right conclusion.

"Curse her!" ground out Perkins; "that she-devil give ye the antidote. If Ledyard had killed her yesterday this wouldn't have happened."

"Several other things wouldn't have happened, either," put in Nick significantly.

Nick watched Perkins keenly.

Perkins showed no surprise at seeing Nick, which was evidence that he knew of the events of the night in which the casket was concerned.

Jim Perkins could only have discovered this from his pals—his brother, Eph, or Ledyard, or Crosby—so he must have met them recently.

"It was you that knifed me!" gritted Perkins, his eyes on Chick.

"And made a botch job of it," returned Chick, unconcernedly. "I got a piece of your grafting apparatus, though, and that was something."

Nick adjusted the bracelets to the ruffian's hands.

"What's this for?" snarled Perkins.

"You're the first prisoner taken on account of the Grubstake Mine conspiracy," the detective answered sternly. "How long since Crosby, Eph Perkins, and Ledyard left here?"

"I ain't seen 'em," was the sullen answer.

"That's a lie," returned Nick sharply, "but fortunately we don't have to depend on you for any information."

He turned to the hag.

"Zolandy," he went on, "call your Indians and have them take this villain to your cabin, and keep him there until called for."

The glitter that came into the old woman's eyes showed the satisfaction she felt in being trusted with this part of the work.

Jim Perkins was one of her bitterest enemies, one of the murderous clique who had attempted her life.

She called Hatch-a-taw and Waukon, who were without, told them quickly in their own tongue what they were to do, and then, when they walked out with Perkins between them, she would have followed.

"Stay," said Nick; "I'm not done with you yet."

The red men marched the prisoner away, and Zolandy remained.

Nick then investigated the premises.

The first thing that interested him was a heap of scrap iron, piled in one corner.

"Recognize that stuff, Chick?" he asked.

"It looks like some of the scrap we took out of that casket in the powder house."

"Correct. That material came out of the other two caskets."

"Then Riley and Kessler must have been buried around here."

"It would seem so."

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Chick suddenly. "Things are not always what they seem."

The light was beginning to drift in on him.

"In this case especially," said Nick. "We'll look for the graves later. Just now it's this plant that claims our attention."

A large assayer's furnace with a box of charcoal fuel stood in one corner.

There was an iron retort in the furnace, an iron pipe running from the retort to a bucket of water that set on the floor.

Nick laid his hand on the furnace, and found that it was warm, so he took off the cover and removed the retort.

It was hermetically sealed, and he unwedged the top and knocked it aside.

A couple of yellow balls, each as big as his two fists, rolled out on the floor.

A chuckle escaped the detective.

"What's that?" asked Chick.

"Gold. Take care of it."

Chick put the yellow balls in his pockets.

Nick picked up the bucket and emptied the water carefully out on the floor.

In the bottom was a shiny substance.

"That's quicksilver, eh?" said Chick.

"That's what it is. This is where the gang retorted their amalgam. They will not market their loot as amalgam, but as retorted gold. That decreases the weight, although it does not materially decrease the bulk. Instead of two thousand five hundred pounds of amalgam, they have the same amount of gold, and it weighs only five hundred to one thousand pounds."

"Which makes it easier, all around," added Chick.

"When they got out they went in a hurry," continued Nick.

"They didn't even have time to take the stuff in the retort."

"That's it. My escape frightened them. We'll go out and see where the two detectives were buried."

Two oblong holes were found, the earth freshly cast out.

Near the end of each hole was a section of weather-beaten pine board.

One was rudely marked:

"Here lies Philip Kessler, detective. Met his death by falling over a cliff."

And the other:

"Here lies Job Riley, detective. Met his death in six-hundred-foot shaft at the Grubstake Mine."

"They were mighty particular about marking those two graves, seems to me," remarked Chick.

"It was part of their plan," answered Nick.

"But there were only two detectives and three caskets."

"They used all three caskets."

"Why so?"

Nick flashed his assistant a quick glance.

"It will be clear to you before long."

Nick turned to the old woman.

"Zolandy, I want you to take us to the place where you found me last night."

The hag started off immediately.

An hour of hard walking brought the three to the timber, and Zolandy indicated the very log over which the detective had fallen.

From there Nick tracked himself through the chaparral to the hastily dug pit from which he had escaped by so narrow a margin.

"Do you remember this spot, Chick?" Nick asked, with a short laugh.

"Not at all. Was I here last night?"

"Yes; it was your presence here that enabled me to escape."

Nick offered a few words in explanation, his account being corroborated by the many footprints visible all about the shallow hole.

But the casket was not in evidence.

From the hole to the road was only a short distance, and Nick had little trouble in locating the exact spot where the breakdown had occurred.

He even found the stone against which the front wheels of the wagon had struck, but the wagon was not there, nor the long pine box that had contained the casket

"The horses ran back to camp," said Nick.

"One of the men went back for them, returned, then he and the others put a new pin in the whiffletrees, patched up the harness, put the casket in the box, placed box and casket in the wagon along with the others, and drove on to the dugout. There the scrap iron was unloaded from two of the caskets, the three caskets were loaded——"

"Two caskets were loaded," qualified Chick. "They didn't have any detective for the third one."

"Three caskets were loaded," laughed Nick. "The effects of that loco haven't worn off yet, it seems."

Nick turned to the old woman.

"The mine is this way, isn't it, Zolandy?" he asked.

"Yes; you find um mine over that way."

"We won't need you any longer. Hold Perkins securely until we come for him."

"Me hold um," answered Zolandy grimly, and turned and started for her cabin.

"Now to get our men," said Nick, "if they're still in camp."

Half an hour's walk brought them to the Grubstake.

Clem Hendricks was in the office, and the entrance of the two detectives, hatless, ragged, and one of them with a blood-stained bandage around his head caused him to spring up in astonishment.

"Keene!" he cried. "And Jarvis! By thunder if it ain't Jarvis. Well well!"

Hendricks dropped into his chair, too far gone for further words.

"Surprised?" queried Nick.

"Surprised!" echoed Hendricks. "I'm knocked slab-sided. One of you fellows is supposed to be hiking along the trail in the directions of Helena, and t'other is supposed to have caught a complaint that's gettin' common in the Grubstake mill lately."

"What complaint?"

"Goin' crazy and then fallin' over a cliff, or down a shaft. Holy smoke!"

"Doesn't it seem rather singular that three men should go crazy in this camp, hand running?" asked Nick.

"Singular, yes. But this here camp has been plenty singular for the last five months." Hendricks dropped his voice. "The two fellers that went off the hooks were detectives. But Jarvis——"

"He's a detective, too."

"Thunder! I had an idee that you might be one, Keene, and jest sashayin' around as a reporter to catch the bullion thieves nappin'."

"Your idea was correct, Hendricks."

"Great blazes! But what ails you chaps? Been drawn through a couple o' knot holes, looks like."

"Haven't much time for talk," said Nick hurriedly. "Where's the super?"

"He went to town on a hurry-up call from the old man, early this mornin'."

"The old man?"

"Dalrymple."

"I see. Where are Ledyard and Eph Perkins?"

"They got the sack. Ledyard left the mill shift last night an' went skylarkin' round, no one knows where, and it made Crosby plenty mad, I'm tellin' you. Eph was a friend o' Crosby's, and when the super fired Ledyard, Eph took his time, too."

"I see."

The game Crosby was playing was a clever one.

So well had the super covered his tracks that even Hendricks did not suspect him.

"Can you get us an outfit of clothes, Hendricks?" Nick asked.

"Well, I reckon!"

"And a two-seated wagon with a fresh team of horses?"

"Sure."

"Would like a driver to bring the team back."

"I'll rustle up a driver for you, too. What luck had you locating the trouble? Any?"

"A little," said Nick. "You'll know all before long, Hendricks."

The assistant super hustled around and got everything.

In an hour Nick and Chick had made themselves look respectable in borrowed clothes, and a two-seated buckboard, a fresh team, and a good driver were waiting at the office door.

Nick's money had been taken from him with his guns and other things, but Chick had managed to hang on to a little during the events of the night, and they tried to force a couple of bills on the assistant super.

But he wouldn't take it. A hearty grip of the hand was all he wanted, he said, and he got it.

The first halt was made at Zolandy's, and there Jim Perkins was taken into the wagon and placed between Nick and Chick.

Money was tendered the old woman and not refused, and so well pleased was she that, in parting, she traced a magic cross and circle on the ground, mumbled over it some gibberish or other, and assured the detectives that they would be immune from bodily dangers for a period of seven years.

At the end of that time they could return and have the operation repeated free of charge.

The driver of the buckboard knew Zolandy well, and he beguiled the first ten miles of the journey with a little information respecting the old crone.

She was half Indian and half Mexican, and, by common repute, well versed in all the diabolical arts of witchcraft.

Half a dozen Indian tribes claimed her as their chief medicine woman, and there were always two or more young braves at her cabin studying to become medicine men.

This information was interesting, and the detectives knew, from their own experience, that it was safer to have Zolandy for a friend than for an enemy.

Ten miles from the mine a horseman came dashing toward them from the direction of Helena, and when the dust cleared away from around him, Nick and Chick recognized him as Patsy.

"By gum!" cried Patsy, pulling his sweating horse to a halt at the side of the buckboard. "This is luck, and no mistake."

He pulled off his hat and mopped the dust and perspiration from his forhead.

"What's wrong?" asked Nick.

"Nothing now, I guess. You can't be in two places at the same time, Nick, so that box is a fake."

"What box are you talking about?"

"One in particular, although there are three of 'em.

"They're in the baggage room of the railroad station at Helena, and each box has a death certificate tacked to the end.

"One's for Philip Kessler, the other's for Job Riley, and the third—well, the third's for you, Nick.

"Anyway, it's made out in the name of Dave Jarvis."

Patsy had left the Gault House before Nick had told Chick to act the rôle of Jarvis. Consequently he thought that Nick had played the part.

"Is that all?" Nick asked.

"It was enough to give me the shock of my life. I got a horse and raced in this direction to investigate."

"What time are the boxes to leave, and which way do they go?"

"They go east on the three-o'clock train."

"By express?"

"No, as baggage. A man accompanies each one."

"Where's Dalrymple?"

"Doing business at the same old stand."

Nick turned to Chick.

"Now, do you understand about those caskets?" he asked.

"I'm on," replied the jubilant Chick. "A great game; great!"

"Driver," went on Nick, "you've got to get us to Helena in time for that three-o'clock eastbound train."

"I'll do it!" declared the driver.

"Follow us, Patsy."

The driver reached over and slapped the lash about the flanks of the bronchos, and the buckboard was fairly lifted off the ground. In fact, for the rest of the trip it seemed to keep in the air about two-thirds of the time.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

Three long narrow boxes were lifted from the baggage-room floor to an extra large truck.

This was a few minutes before the arrival of the east-bound train, and the work was performed by the baggage agent and his assistant.

It was a hard lift for two men.

"What in Sam Hill makes these here things weigh so much?" grumbled the assistant.

"The health laws require that caskets have to be lead lined an' hermetically sealed," explained the baggage man. "That's the reason they're so heavy, I guess."

"From the heft of 'em I should think they was all lead. How much do you think they weigh?"

"Over three hundred."

"All o' that, I'll bet."

The baggage agent wheeled the truck off down the platform to a point opposite the place where the baggage car usually stopped.

A man who looked like a loafer leaned against one corner of the station building and watched the gruesome load on the truck as it was pushed past.

Farther along the platform a man in a long frock coat was walking up and down, apparently waiting for the train.

He wore ministerial sideburns and a pair of glasses, and carried a small but very respectable black satchel.

The truck with the three boxes was brought to a halt not far from where the ministerial person happened to be standing, and he walked up to them and carefully adjusted his glasses.

Then he read the certificate with which each box was decorated.

"Sad, sad," murmured the ministerial gentleman, and a tall man, with a full, gray beard, approached in time to hear the words.

The tall man was evidently well stricken in years, but there was not the characteristic stoop to his shoulders which there should have been.

He looked at the ministerial gentleman sharply.

"Sad?" he exclaimed; "you may well say so." His voice trembled. "My son is in this box."

Another man advanced to the truck.

This third individual looked like a miner who had made a stake and was going "back East."

He had on a brand-new suit of clothes, wore a slouch hat, and his face was covered with red whiskers.

As the apparently aged gentleman made his pathetic remark, he laid one hand on the box bearing the Dave Jarvis certificate.

"Indeed!" sighed the ministerial person, averting his eyes.

The loafer at the corner of the station caught a flash of the averted eyes and slouched forward toward the truck.

"Yes," went on the aged man, "I came clear from York State to take him home."

"That's good as far as it goes," said the man in the frock coat, with a sudden change in his manner, "but it doesn't go far enough. Nate Crosby, you're my prisoner!"

"And you're mine, Eph Perkins!"

The man in black, with a deftness that cheated the eyes, had brought out a small revolver and was pressing the muzzle against the old man's breast.

Simultaneously with this move, the loafer had developed a weapon of his own and leveled it at the fellow in the reach-me-downs.

There was a pause, dramatic in its intensity, and broken by a third voice:

"And here's mine!"

A second loafer came down the platform with a second individual, whose get-up matched that of the miner in the store clothes.

"What—what is the meaning of this—this outrage?" asked the supposed old man, with a weak attempt at bluster.

"Look at the man beside you, Crosby!"

The old man swerved his eyes and took in the figure of Chick Carter.

Chick had the handcuffs about Eph Perkins' wrists and accommodatingly removed his hat for Crosby's benefit.

"Jarvis!" gasped Crosby.

Then, in a twinkling, Crosby plunged his hand into the breast of his coat and drew a dagger.

"Your life for this, Nick Carter!"

He flung himself toward Chick, but the knife was suddenly knocked from his hand, and he was caught by the arm and whirled around.

"You're a little mixed," came the suave voice of the man in the frock coat. "I am Nick Carter, and that young man is my assistant. "Now, then!"

The handcuffs were in Nick's hands.

With a lightninglike move he got one about Crosby's right wrist.

Crosby, dazed for a moment, soon recovered himself and began to fight like a demon, but he came easy for the Little Giant.

After a brief bout both cuffs were in place.

"The jig is up, Crosby," said Nick.

"You're—you're that infernal reporter!" fumed Crosby.

"The man you tried to bury alive," answered Nick. "You played a strong game, Crosby, but our hands are the best."

Nick turned to Patsy, who, like Chick, was disguised as a tough.

"Did you have any trouble with Ledyard, Patsy?"

"His nerve left him the instant I had him looking into my gun. The three were together, and I had them spotted before the two walked over this way."

The train, at that moment, drew up at the station.

"You'll have to get away from here, gentlemen," said the baggage agent; "we've got to get these caskets into the car."

"Those caskets won't go East to-day," answered Nick.

"Eh?" queried the baggage agent, blinking his eyes.

"Those caskets are to remain in Helena," went on Nick.

"Three passengers are traveling with them, and——"

"These men with the handcuffs on are the passengers who were to travel with the caskets. They're not going, and neither are those long boxes."

The officer on duty at the station had reached the scene by this time.

"What's the row here?" demanded the officer.

"We've got three candidates for the lockup, and——"

"Who are you?"

Nick told him, and the officer's manner instantly underwent a change.

"I'll call the wagon," said he, starting away.

"Call an express wagon, too," said Nick.

"What for?"

"For these."

Nick indicated the boxes on the truck.

"An undertaker's wagon is what we want for those."

"An express wagon," repeated Nick, "and a good strong one. I want to hold a post mortem on these boxes at headquarters."

"All right," answered the officer, in a puzzled tone.

"Patsy," Nick went on, "turn Ledyard over to Chick and strike out for the Hoffman Building. We can't have a post mortem without Mr. Dalrymple."

"I'll get him," said Patsy.

Chick took charge of both prisoners.

The patrol wagon came first, but Nick would not load his prisoners into it until he had seen the three long boxes put aboard the express wagon.

Then he insisted on the patrol wagon driving slowly so that the express wagon could follow close behind.

There was a surprise at headquarters when the three boxes were brought in.

Patsy had already arrived at the station with Dalrymple, and had given the chief his first intimation that the great New York detective was in the city and might be expected any moment with a batch of prisoners.

Nick was cordially welcomed, and the prisoners were taken into the chief's office, while the boxes were being unloaded.

"What sort of an affair is this?" asked the chief, who was totally in the dark.

"Murder and robbery," answered Nick.

"Murder?" echoed the chief.

Nick nodded.

"Did you know Job Riley and Phil Kessler, chief?"

"I knew them well. This has to do with the Grubstake Mine matter, has it? I didn't know you had been employed on that case, Mr. Carter."

"I wanted to wind up the affair before my connection with it was generally known."

"Why are these caskets brought here?"

"We want to examine their contents."

"Perhaps the coroner, or the undertaker, should be summoned."

"No; we want some official of the bank where the Grubstake Mining Company keep their funds."

"What in the——"

"Perhaps Mr. Dalrymple will favor us with the name of the institution?"

Nick turned to the mine manager and found Dalrymple was in a pitiable state of collapse.

Patsy had arrested him at his desk and taken him completely by surprise.

The reassuring note, received very early that morning, had led Dalrymple to believe that the "great N. C." was out of the way, and the awakening had come as a great shock.

Since being brought to the station, the manager had sat with his chin on his breast and his manacled hands in his lap in front of him.

"Peoples'," he said, without looking up.

"Telephone for the president and cashier of the Peoples' Bank to come here at once, will you, chief?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carter," answered the astonished chief.

In fifteen minutes a little group, which included the bank officials, were clustered around the three boxes.

"I wish to perform an autopsy on the contents of these caskets," said Nick gravely, standing over the first box, screw driver in hand, "and I have summoned you gentlemen from the bank, thinking our examination will develop something in your line."

Every one was completely at sea, excepting, of course, Nick and Chick.

With Chick's aid, Nick quickly removed one of the box covers and took the screws out of the lid of the casket beneath.

"This casket," said Nick, "is supposed to contain the remains of Philip Kessler, slain at the Grubstake Mine by the prisoners I have just brought in."

"It was supposed," spoke up the chief, "that Kessler went off the jump and fell over a cliff."

"His death was not an accident," answered Nick.

Chick took one end of the lid and Nick the other, and lifted it off.

There was no human body in the casket; simply a glittering heap of retorted gold!

Cries of amazement broke from everybody except the two detectives.

"We have here in these boxes," said Nick, "the entire amount of gold stolen from the Grubstake Mining Company during the last five months.

"Dalrymple, the manager of the company, was one of the conspirators, and Nate Crosby, the superintendent at the mine, was another.

"They were assisted in their operations by the amalgamators who worked on the two shifts.

"It was an easy graft, and mysterious because every one who had anything to do with milling the gold was concerned in it, and consequently professed to know nothing about it.

"Copper wires were strung in the battery boxes, and these wires held dangling disks of copper, which caught all the best gold before it had a chance to reach the plates.

"This amalgam was scraped off, retorted at a dugout in the mountains, a long distance from the mine, then cached in two holes in the ground, which had headboards and were supposedly the graves of Kessler and Riley.

"The thieves knew they would have trouble in disposing of their hoard of gold, and the method they hit upon was as unique as anything I have ever met with in all my experience with criminals.

"They secured these three caskets, ostensibly the regulation kind for the shipment of bodies, but really mere shells, weighted to give the impression to every one outside the clique that they were lead lined.

"They had no one for the third casket, although they may have surmised that there would be a candidate for it. They needed three caskets, however, because they had a thousand pounds of bullion—base bullion, and extremely bulky.

"The caskets were taken to the caches and the gold stowed away in them, as you see it here, the intention of the conspirators being to get away with the booty, refine it somewhere in the East, and then market it.

"Fortunately for the stockholders of the Grubstake Mining Company, I and my assistants have been able to apprehend five of the six who conprised the robbers' clique. The sixth man came to town last night with a message for Dalrymple, and may yet be run in.

"The missing prisoner is at the county jail, in charge of the sheriff. We brought him in from the dugout,

where the gang had their retorting plant. He was wounded, however, and we left him in the hospital ward of the jail."

After Nick's little talk to the chief and the bank officials, the other two boxes were opened, and, as expected, found to be filled with bullion.

Directors of the mining company, resident in Helena, were called in, the gold turned over to them, and, by them, turned over to the bank.

Nick and his assistants received hearty congratulations on all sides for their successful work.

The sixth member of the clique was not captured until long afterward, when it fell to Nick to trail him down for another crime, and finally discover his identity.

One of the five prisoners turned State's evidence in the matter of the murdered detectives, told how they had been made victims of the loco mixture administered by Crosby, had gone to their doom while their minds were in a frenzied condition, and where they had been buried.

This informer, as may be surmised by the reader, was Dalrymple.

The bodies of the unfortunate detectives were exhumed for purposes of an autopsy, and then, as no relatives or friends volunteered to furnish bonds for having the remains sent East, they were buried in a Helena cemetery at the expense of the mining company.

Crosby was convicted of the charge of manslaughter and went to the penitentiary for a long term.

Ledyard and the two Perkins brothers were tried on the robbery charge and also went over the road.

Dalrymple accompanied them, but he was sentenced for a much shorter term, because of the fact that he helped the prosecution.

A week after the robbers were arrested and the bullion recovered the Carters were back in New York, and Nick had laid his report before his client, Mr. Cecil Trenwyck.

It is needless to say that the report was entirely satisfactory.

THE END.

"Nick Carter's Auto Chase; or, Trailing the Red Spider," is the title of the story that will appear in the next issue of this weekly. A bank in Latimer, Vermont, has been robbed of $75,000. Nick Carter quickly sees that the robbery is far different from the ordinary run of crimes of that character. The surprising developments that follow Nick's arrival on the scene, including the mysterious shot in the telephone booth, which nearly costs the detective's life, and the strange part he plays as chauffeur of the *Red Spider*, form a fascinating detective story of the deepest interest. The issue is No. 18, and it will be out January 11th.

SCIENTISTS SAY DOGS USE WIG-WAG LANGUAGE TO TALK.

It is no doubt a startling conclusion, but Doctor Louis Robinson, the English scientist, who has been investigating the mysteries of canine language, has practically set up the conclusion that a dog speaks with his tail tip.

In the case of all hunting dogs which pack together, the tail is carried aloft, and is very free in motion. There is no doubt that foxhounds habitually watch the tails of those in front of them when drawing a covert. If a faint drag is detected, enough to suggest the presence of a fox, but not sufficient to be sworn to vocally, the tail of the dog that finds the scent is set into motion, and, as it becomes warmer, the tail wags more quickly.

As soon as the others see the signal, they join with the first, and there is seen an assembly of wagging tails before the slightest cry is made.

Should the scent prove weak, the hounds separate again, and the wagging grows less marked; but if it again grows stronger, the wagging is continued with renewed vigor, until one after another, the hounds begin to whine, and, yelling, stream off in Indian file along the line of the scent.

When the pack is at full cry upon a strong scent, the tails cease to wag and are carried along in full view. From this, Doctor Robinson deduces that tails are used by dogs in talking, and each wiggle and wag of a dog's tail has its meaning in canine language.

UNDER A CLOUD.

By E. T. TAGGARD.

It was his sixteenth birthday, and he was a prisoner in a felon's cell. A card upon its door was inscribed with his name and the crime with which he stood charged: "John Townsend—Embezzlement."

John Townsend kept himself secure from the curious gaze of the many people who flocked through the prison corridors by remaining comparatively secluded in the rear portion of his cell; but to the experienced eye of the jailers he appeared a youth of boyish, almost effeminate frame, with a face as pale as marble, and a nervous manner that one, inclined always to view life from the darkest side, would interpret as a manifestation of guilt.

No word of complaint escaped him. He bore the restraint of his prison life without a murmur. He neither alleged his innocence nor denied his guilt of the crime for which he was suffering, and days passed along—long, dreary days they were—and he was still a prisoner.

Every day his mother came to visit him. Her heart was a heavy one, for, although she loved her boy, the evidence of his guilt was so overwhelming that it crushed her hopes. She urged him to confess, and solicit pardon from his employers; but her prayers were unheeded, and nothing save the echo of the damp prison walls replied.

Tremaine & Co. were large importers of silks and lace goods. The business they did annually was enormous, and the details required the assistance of a large corps of employees. John Townsend was one. He had been two years with the firm, and by his attention to its business affairs had won promotion and the confidence of his employers. His position and his salary had been advanced until he began to realize the ambition of his young life to prove of substantial assistance to his widowed mother.

Robert Tremaine, the son of the senior member of the firm, was about his own age, but in no other respect was there a similarity between them. Robert was extravagant and dissipated in his habits; his associates were of a character to bring discredit upon him, and he spent his nights in drunkenness and debauchery.

He was always the last to appear at the store in the morning, and his bloodless face and bloodstained eyes on those occasions too plainly told the causes that had delayed him. His besotted appearance began to excite

comment among his fellow clerks, but yet his father either could or would not see what was as plain as the sun at noon to everybody else, that Robert Tremaine was on the high road to destruction and infamy.

Then it was that John Townsend became his friend. If his mind was paralyzed from the wild orgies of the previous night, and he stumbled awkwardly over his accounts, it was the clear brain of John Townsend that made his pathway clear. If the pen fell from his tremulous fingers, the firm hand of John Townsend grasped it. This, perhaps, was one reason why the senior member of the firm of Tremaine & Co. had no suspicion awakened as to his son's improprieties. His work was always cleverly and properly done, but it was John Townsend who did it.

Lately business had increased, and it became necessary for many of the employees to remain at night until a late hour in order to complete the business of the day. It was the practice of the members of the firm to absent themselves on these occasions, but on the particular night to which this story has reference the senior member of the firm remained. Inspired by his presence, the employees worked with more than their usual diligence until the hour for closing arrived.

Among the last to leave was John Townsend. He left the store, but he was followed. He had proceeded but a short distance when a hand was placed upon his shoulder.

"You are my prisoner."

He turned pale. He was unconscious of having committed any crime for which he should be arrested, but the hour was late, and he knew that if he was taken into custody he would be at least subjected to imprisonment until morning. He turned to the officer.

"I think you must be mistaken in the person. For what do you arrest me?"

"That's cool," replied the officer, "to ask me such a question with that bundle under your arm. Come back with me to the store, and let me know what you've got there. There's been lots of stuff stolen from Tremaine & Co. lately, but I guess I've got the pig by the ear now."

Thus accosted, John Townsend retraced his steps to the store which he had left a few minutes before. He entered, and was taken back to the office, where Mr. Tremaine and his son Robert still tarried.

"I think I've caught the bird," said the officer.

"What! John Townsend!" exclaimed Mr. Tremaine, with great surprise. "I could not have believed it. I would have trusted him with the key of the safe."

"Of what am I charged, Mr. Tremaine?" inquired John, in a mild tone of voice.

"Embezzlement—stealing. Robbing your employer. Do you know what that is, John?" replied Mr. Tremaine indignantly; for, now that his surprise had passed away, it was replaced by anger.

"I am innocent, sir."

"Are you? How came you by this, then?" And Mr. Tremaine seized the bundle which John Townsend still carried under his arm, took the string from it, and held up to his gaze a large roll of imported silk.

John Townsend could not suppress an exclamation of surprise as the contents of the bundle were thus unfolded to him. He looked toward Robert Tremaine, who stood, pale and trembling, behind his father. There was a silent appeal in John's eyes as he glanced toward him, but it was not recognized.

"What do you say now, John?" asked Mr. Tremaine. "Is this your return for my kindness to you? I did not think when I advanced you over the heads of so many others that you would not only prove unfaithful to your trust, but ungrateful to me. What have you now to say, sir."

"Appearances are against me, Mr. Tremaine?"

"Well, that is cool. Here you are caught by a detective whom I employed, because systematic robbery has been carried on in this store for some time past, caught in the very act with the goods in your possession, and you are willing to admit that appearances are against you. Is that all you have to say? Had you no confederates? You could not possibly have continued these operations without assistance. Tell me who it is, if you expect mercy from me," said Mr. Tremaine.

John Townsend again glanced toward Robert Tremaine in silent appeal.

"I do not ask for mercy, Mr. Tremaine."

"And you have nothing more to say?"

"Nothing."

"Then take him away, officer. I must make a terrible example of this ungrateful boy."

There was nothing to do but to follow the officer, and that night, for the first time in his life, John Townsend was incarcerated in a felon's cell. The next day he was removed to the city prison.

The morning of the day of trial arrived at last. Mrs. Townsend was at her son's cell door at an early hour, endeavoring, by her cheerful words, to encourage him that he might be enabled to undergo the terrible ordeal before him with a brave heart. The prison van was in waiting, and the prisoners were taken to it. The names of those who were to be tried that day had all been called, but John Townsend's was not in the list.

Mrs. Townsend was preparing to leave, when the warden of the prison approached her:

"You will please follow me to my office, Mrs. Townsend."

She did so with a palpitating heart. What new calamity had befallen her son? The unexpected postponement of the trial and the warden's words filled her with despair.

"Mrs. Townsend," said he, after they had been seated, "last night Robert Tremaine died. Before he died he called his father to his bedside and there acknowledged that he, and not your son, was the thief. John Townsend was the innocent medium through which the deed was perfected. He did not know what the bundles contained. Robert Tremaine would request your son to leave them with a certain man on his way home, and next day would call and get his pay. I am happy to inform you that these facts have been laid before the district attorney by Mr. Tremaine, and that I have received an order for your son's discharge."

Mrs. Townsend hastened back to her son's cell with the glad tidings. John Townsend was formally released, and in a few minutes thereafter mother and son left the prison with happy hearts.

The next day Mr. Tremaine sent for John Townsend. The interview was short but affecting. The dead body of his unfortunate son lay in the room adjoining, his eyes forever closed, his lips forever sealed.

"Why did you not tell me this?" sobbed Mr. Tremaine.

"I could not, sir. Twice I was tempted to speak, but when I looked toward Robert and saw his pale face and trembling limbs my heart failed me. I chose rather to

go to prison and leave it for time or his conscience to do me justice."

"My brave boy," exclaimed Mr. Tremaine, as he drew the speaker to his heart. "I shall never forget you."

He kept his word.

After the funeral John Townsend was installed in his old position, and five years thereafter, when Mr. Tremaine retired from business, John Townsend became the junior member of the firm.

WHO WAS THE MODEL?

Or, Missing: A Beautiful Heiress.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Matilda Mason, a beautiful heiress, who lives with her uncle, the Reverend Doctor Lawton, in Boston, mysteriously disappears. The case is reported to Chief Inspector Watts by Doctor Lawton and Miss Mason's fiancé, Benjamin Wade. Detective Sheridan is assigned to the case, and starts to go to Doctor Lawton's house to see a picture of the missing girl.

After seeing the pictures, Detective Keene views Miss Mason's room, and notes with interest some sketches she has made. In talking with Mrs. Lawton, the detective learns that Miss Mason had been out almost every morning for some time before her disappearance, and had neglected to say how she had spent her time.

Keene then leaves the house with Wade, who shows a disposition to stick to the detective as closely as he can. Keene visits several art schools in search of a clew, but with no results. Keene, who looks with suspicion on Wade, tells the young man that he will meet him at police headquarters the next morning.

Before meeting Wade the next morning, Keene resumes his visits to art schools. At the studio of John Hale he sees a life-size statue in marble of a beautiful girl. Hale has not yet arrived, but Keene finds a model named Miss Bell in the studio, and the detective asks her if she knows who posed for the statue. Before Miss Bell can answer, Hale's step is heard, and Miss Bell tells Keene she will meet him that afternoon. Keeping the appointment with Keene, Miss Bell tells him that the girl who posed for the statue is Miss Mason, and that Hale is in love with her. Miss Bell does not give Keene this information until Keene promises her a hundred dollars if the information she has given solves the mystery.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN APPROACHING CRISIS.

For reasons of his own, Sheridan Keene made it a point to leave the Reynolds Hotel behind him as quickly as possible. He had no idea of permitting Miss Jane Bell, whom he rightly inferred was as clever and designing a woman as one ordinarily encounters, to discover any of the motives by which he was actuated, as she very possibly might have done had he allowed her to leave the hotel in advance of him, or if he now left her the opportunity of tracing his movements.

He slipped around the corner and across Washington Street, then entered one of the large dry-good stores, where he evaded possible pursuit in the moving throng of people.

Half an hour later he entered the private office of Chief Inspector Watts, in Pemberton Square.

"Well, Inspector Keene, you are quite a stranger," said the chief, looking up when the detective entered, and signing him to a chair. "I take it you have been busy."

"Rather busy, Chief Watts," smiled Sheridan Keene, accepting a cigar.

"Are you rounding up the game?"

"I am getting to it by degrees, chief," was the reply. "I shall require about one more day, I think."

"Have you discovered the missing heiress?"

"Not yet, sir," said Keene, shaking his head. "If you have time, just now, I'll report the case as I see it."

"In just a moment," bowed Chief Watts.

He turned to his desk and affixed his signature to several documents, which he presently called his secretary to receive, then turned again to the waiting detective.

"Now, Inspector Keene, I can hear you," he said gravely. "What do you make of the case?"

"It is a case of abduction, Chief Watts," said Keene readily. "Of that I am satisfied."

"What facts have you gathered?"

"First, that Miss Mason is a girl of good character, and not likely to be indulging in any sort of an escapade requiring so extended an absence. The facts are as stated by her uncle. She left home Tuesday evening, and has not been heard from since."

"Did you see her photographs?"

"Yes, chief, I did," bowed the detective. "They at once suggested to me a possibility which I since have verified. The girl is very beautiful, a fact of which she evidently is secretly vain, and which has led her to consent to a proposition, the nature of which she since has been keeping in the dark."

"What is that?"

"She has been posing for a seminude statue for John Hale, the sculptor."

"Ah, I see!"

"Of course, her natural desire has been to keep the fact secret. She has been visiting his studio mornings, and indirectly deceiving her uncle and aunt as to her whereabouts. They would not have consented to such conduct, you know."

"Well, hardly," smiled the chief.

"I have learned, also, that Hale has been making love to the girl," Sheridan Keene continued, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "Just what the true character of this sentiment is I am not yet prepared to say. It is very possible that Hale has formed a genuine affection for the girl, to which she, perhaps, has felt an inclination to respond."

"But I understand that she is engaged to Mr. Wade."

"That is true, Chief Watts," assented Keene. "But the girl's heart must have changed after her engagement. According to statements made by Mrs. Lawton, her aunt, I am led to suspect that this may have been the case. The girl has been very serious of late, frequently remaining in the solitude of her chamber, and evincing in a general way some unusual state of mind. I think possibly that she may have become infatuated with Hale, and in time regretted her engagement to Wade. I don't blame her much in that case, when I compare the two men."

"Go on, Detective Keene."

"Be that as it may, Hale certainly has been making love to the girl. How far this may have gone I am not yet prepared to say. I hope to have all the facts in my possession by to-morrow at this time."

"And the girl?"

"I can't say as to the girl," replied the detective. "On Tuesday night a girl answering Miss Mason's descrip-

tion telephoned to Hale, making an appointment with him on Cambridge Bridge. I know that Hale went there to meet her, but what followed I have not yet learned."

"Have you seen Hale?"

"Not for any purpose as yet, Chief Watts. I now want a warrant for his arrest."

The chief looked a little surprised.

"Can you sustain an allegation?" he asked gravely.

"I will go a little deeper into the case, Chief Watts, before I answer that question," said Keene, with a curious smile. "The affair has features which are not so superficial as those presented, and from which some rather curious deductions may be drawn. I will run them over, if you say so."

"Do so, by all means," bowed the chief. "Perhaps I can suggest some effective steps in the emergency."

Sheridan Keene drew his chair nearer, and for a half hour the two clever officers discussed the mysterious affair in all its various lights and shades.

At the end of that time, or a little later, Sheridan Keene left the headquarters building alone.

And he carried in his pocket a warrant for the arrest of John Hale.

CHAPTER IX.

A BROKEN STATUE AND AN ARREST.

About half an hour before noon on the following day Sheridan Keene approached the studio of John Hale, in company with an officer in citizen's dress.

"You wait here in the corridor, Brackett," he said, "at the foot of the stairs. I don't anticipate any resistance from this man, but one never can tell what he may run against. I may be with him a quarter hour or so before I arrest him, however."

"I will wait here, sir, until something comes off."

Despite his observations to the contrary, Sheridan Keene eased the revolver in his hip pocket as he ascended the stairs. He did not knock at the door, but opened it and entered.

John Hale was seated in a chair near one of the windows, engaged in studying a design in an art magazine. He was the only occupant of the room, and evidently was at leisure. He looked up when the detective entered, and showed some surprise on seeing the man whom he had found with Jane Bell in his studio on the previous morning; but he at once laid down the publication and arose to meet him.

Keene closed the door and stood motionless on the floor.

"You are Mr. Hale, I believe," he said quietly.

"Yes, that is my name," bowed the sculptor, with grave composure. "You are the gentleman I saw here yesterday with Miss Bell, I think."

"I did not come here with Miss Bell, sir," responded Keene, steadily regarding him. "I merely chanced to find her here when I entered."

"Is that so?" murmured Hale, with evident surprise. "Yet I understood her to say——"

"What she said is of very little consequence," interposed the detective. "I called here then with an object, and am here now with an object. My name, Mr. Hale, is Sheridan Keene, and I am one of the Boston inspectors of police."

Mr. Hale started slightly, and by slow degrees the color faded from his cheeks; but in all other respects he retained his outward composure.

"And pray, Inspector Keene, what is your mission here?" he asked, with an indescribable hardening of tone, and a steadier scrutiny of the detective's face.

"I presume we are alone," said Keene gravely.

"We are, sir; but what if we were not?"

"I might shrink from saying what it still would become my duty to say," Keene replied. "I have called here, Mr. Hale, to ascertain, if possible, the name of the subject who posed for the figure occupying the alcove yonder."

The sculptor's bearing instantly underwent a change. He drew himself up with haughty dignity, darkly frowning, and replied with considerable sternness:

"At whose instigation do you come here to ask me that question?"

"Why do you object to giving me the information, Mr. Hale?" replied Keene, instead of responding to the other's inquiry.

"Chiefly because I do not wish to do so."

"You must have more stringent reasons than that of mere personal sentiment, sir."

"I have several reasons," cried Hale, quite angrily. "Models do not care to be advertised as such. You ask for information which it is not customary to disclose. By what right, sir, do you come here with such a question?"

"That of an officer of the law in the performance of his duty," said Keene, with grave austerity.

"Then you may as well take yourself hence, sir, for I shall not answer the question," said the sculptor shortly.

But Sheridan Keene did not move from his position between him and the door.

"Mr. Hale," he said sternly; "I hope it may not become necessary to compel you to disclose the information you are withholding. It is intimated that a certain young lady of Beacon Street has been regularly visiting your studio, and that she was the subject from which yonder figure was made."

John Hale was steadily growing more pale.

"You are misinformed!" he cried vehemently. "That is not true!"

"Then you deny the rumor, do you?"

"I do, emphatically!"

"Are you not acquainted with Miss Tillie Mason, of Beacon Street?"

"The niece of Doctor Lawton?"

"The same, sir."

"Yes; I have met the young lady."

"Has she not frequently called at your studio during the past six months?"

"She has been here occasionally."

"With what object?"

"Doubtless that which brings many other people here," cried Hale, striving hard to contain his resentment and impatience. "She is interested in art, has purchased some of my work, and is a girl of unquestionable refinement and culture. You are doing her an injustice, and me an outrage, by these persistent inquiries."

"Yet I am doing only what my duty, under the circumstances, requires of me," Keene returned, with unabated decisiveness. "When did you last see Miss Mason?"

"I have not seen her for a week."

"You are sure of that?"

"Do I speak in any uncertain tone?" cried Hale forcibly, his fine countenance white with rage.

"You had an appointment to meet her last Tuesday night."

The sculptor started as if struck a blow. Surprise that Sheridan Keene should have learned of that appointment was sufficient to have occasioned this perturbation.

"Suppose I did," Hale answered violently. "What of it?"

"You went to Cambridge Bridge to meet her."

"I did not meet her! I have not seen her since——"

"Wait one moment," commanded Keene, with abrupt and startling severity. "As a matter of fact, Mr. Hale, was not Tillie Mason the model for that figure?"

"I deny it!"

"Consider for a moment, and——"

"I will not! I deny it!"

"Have a care!" cried Keene, with eyes never leaving his hearer's hueless face. "It will be an easy matter to bring the girl here to this studio, and by measurements and comparisons establish the absolute truth."

"Do you say so, you dog of a detective!"

The words broke with indescribable violence from the sculptor's twitching lips. Pale as death, shaken from head to foot with suppressed passion, with eyes in which apprehension and furious resentment battled for supremacy, he turned sharp on his heel and entered his workroom.

He was absent scarce an instant. When he returned, he bore in one of his muscular hands a heavy sledge hammer, with a head of iron.

Sheridan Keene suspected his purpose the moment he saw it. With a cry he sprang forward and caught the infuriated man by the arm.

"What are you about to do?" he cried, forcibly struggling to stay him and secure the tool.

"Thwart a meddlesome scoundrel, sir!" thundered Hale, with terrible violence. "Let go my arm!"

"Wait; you will ruin——"

"Let go, or I'll strike you first," roared the sculptor, wrenching free his powerful arm, and hurling Sheridan Keene, despite the latter's utmost efforts, far across the room.

Then the heavy tool rose and fell, swung by a man whose very muscle was developed like that of a trained athlete, and given redoubled strength by his awful passion. The blow was like that of a trip hammer. The heavy head of the tool met the breast of the marble figure, shivering the stone into numberless pieces, ruining forever the labor of weeks and months, destroying a piece of art wrought alone for art's sake, and sending the shattered fragments of chaste stone to the floor with a crash that seemed well-nigh to shake the building.

Sheridan Keene uttered an irrepressible groan of dismay, but John Hale flung down the hammer with a laugh that rang through the room, so intensely bitter, yet so scornfully triumphant, that the blood of the detective fairly chilled.

"Now bring along your girl and make your comparison," Hale cried, with furious contempt. "Thus I will always stand between any good woman and a meddlesome man!"

Keene drew himself up, meeting the speaker eye to eye, and said, with genuine sadness:

"You have done yourself and me an injustice, John Hale. I would have prevented that destruction could I have done so."

"No doubt of it!" sneered the sculptor.

"But not for the reason you at present infer," said Keene, striding to the door and throwing it open.

As he did so, a clock on a neighboring church struck the hour of noon.

"Come up here, Officer Brackett," the detective instantly called, and the officer sprang up the stairs.

"What's the meaning of this?" Hale now demanded, with an indescribable expression in his glowing eyes. "Another officer here?"

"There's our man, Brackett," Sheridan Keene said sternly, with a commanding wave of the hand, and utterly ignoring Hale's question.

"It means, John Hale, that you are under arrest upon this warrant. I will read it for you, if you desire."

"Arrest—warrant?" gasped Hale. "What charge?"

"That of having abducted Miss Matilda Mason, who has been missing from her home since last Tuesday night."

"Abducted! Tillie Mason abducted!" cried Hale, now white as the linen at his throat. "My God, you don't mean ——"

"Take him away, Brackett!"

"Wait, wait!" pleaded Hale, like a man breaking down under sudden, overwhelming news. "Tell me first——"

"Brackett, remove that man!" Keene interrupted, with voice grown violently stern.

And despite his repeated protests and appeals, John Hale, the last man known to have seen Tillie Mason alive, the man who had gone on that fatal Tuesday night to meet her on Cambridge Bridge, was removed from his own studio, and forthwith incarcerated in the city jail.

CHAPTER X.

KEENE'S MASTER STROKE.

If any one had doubted for a moment that this was a genuine arrest, upon genuine suspicion, then one must have known far more than appeared upon the surface. As a matter of fact, Detective Keene did not even suspect that John Hale had abducted Miss Mason.

There was also a special occasion for Sheridan Keene's getting rid of John Hale in so speedy and decisive a way. He had caught sight of a dark-blue skirt and the familiar figure of Jane Bell among the people who had gathered in the corridor, drawn there by the disturbance. Sheridan Keene had timed this arrest to the very hour when he had arranged to meet the sculptor's betrayer, Jane Bell. Possibly it was calculated to save the detective a second journey to Boylston Street.

As Hale was forced from the studio, too dismayed and overcome to offer much resistance, Keene caught the girl's eye, and, with a significant movement of his head, invited her into the room. She came at once, slipping out like a snake from among the crowd, and the detective quickly closed the door.

"What's the matter?" she asked, with amazement pictured on her painted features. "What have you done to Hale?"

"Arrested him," said Keene bluntly.

"For what?" exclaimed the girl, in great surprise.

"For the abduction of Tillie Mason."

"You don't mean it?"

"I do mean it. Miss Mason has been missing from her home since last Tuesday night, and Hale met her that evening on Cambridge Bridge. I guess I have finally run down the game."

"But what has he done to the girl?"

"What he has not done could probably be told more easily," said Keene, with grim severity. "He has outrageously wronged her, and doubtless found it necessary to put her out of the way. It is a hundred to one that her body now lies at the bottom of the Charles River."

"Merciful heavens!" exclaimed Jane Bell, quite pale and shocked. "What a terrible tragedy. Who destroyed the figure yonder?"

"Hale himself."

"But why?"

"He found himself cornered, and probably feared the girl's body would be recovered and brought here for identification, by comparing it with the statue," Keene hurriedly explained. "Oh, it is a dastardly piece of work all through! I will see that Hale swings for it in the end."

"He deserves to! He deserves to!" reiterated Miss Bell, with passionate bitterness. "It is a wonder Tillie Mason's fate hasn't been my own."

"What do you mean?" asked Keene, with manifest surprise.

"I mean what I say," cried the girl, warming under some bitter recollection. "John Hale is a scoundrel! He made love to me before he ever saw Tillie Mason. He would have ruined me as he doubtless has ruined her. I am glad of it, that he has been brought to justice. I hope in my heart that he will swing for the hideous crime."

There was no doubt that the girl meant what she said. Her angry eyes and twitching lips, the clenching of her white hands, the passionate trembling of her shapely figure—all indicated her bitter and irrepressible resentment, and that she was a woman of furiously jealous and vengeful spirit.

Sheridan Keene nodded in grim approval of her passionate words, and said firmly:

"There's no doubt about his guilt. I will take mighty good care that he's brought to the ringbolt."

"I hope so."

"I know so! Here, boy," he added, as the door of the studio opened and Hale's lad entered the room. "Have you a key to this place?"

"Yes, sir, I have," the lad replied, in evident astonishment and dismay.

"Lock the studio, then; and keep out of it till Hale is informed, and gives his own instructions."

"Has Mr. Hale been arrested, sir?" was the sorrowful inquiry.

"Yes, and is likely to remain under arrest," was the curt rejoinder. "Where's his key?"

"Here, sir."

"Get what things that belong to you, then, and come along with me," Keene peremptorily said. "Come, Miss Bell, we will go out in company. I have not forgotten our little compact, and will fix you up outside."

The girl nodded approvingly.

Keene waited until the lad secured his few belongings, and then led the way to the corridor and locked the studio door, putting the key in his own pocket.

"Now, my boy, what's your name?" demanded Keene, delaying his departure for a moment.

"John—John Miller, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"Number —— Beech Street, sir."

"With your parents?"

"Yes, sir."

"Run home, then, and stay there," commanded Keene. "I shall want you later. Now, Miss Bell, come with me."

Taking Jane Bell's arm with friendly familiarity, Sheridan Keene descended the stairs with her and crossed Boylston Street, entering the Public Garden.

"Now, Jenny, my dear," he laughed lightly; "I will make good my promise to you."

"All right, Mr. Keene," she said, with a significant smile and flash of her seductive eyes. "Not a bad day's work, is it?"

"Not bad for either of us, Jenny," laughed Keene, producing a roll of bills. "Here's the eighty, and I hope I shall meet you again."

"Any time you say," whispered the girl, drawing nearer, and slipping into her pocket the notes she had received.

"Then I will meet you right here Sunday evening at eight o'clock," said Keene softly.

"I will be here."

"I shall be off duty, then."

"You can count on me if you will come."

"Rest easy as to that."

"Do you live at home?"

The girl shrugged her shoulders and laughed significantly.

"My own home," she replied. "I have a room in Gleason's Court."

"Sunday night, then, at eight o'clock."

"Sure thing."

They shook hands and parted, Sheridan Keene returning to Boylston Street, and the girl starting off across the garden. She looked back twice; and with the last look Sheridan Keene was lost in the crowd. But the girl was not lost to the detective, nor did he intend she should escape him so easily. The hundred dollars with which he had parted was a sum he did not care to permanently lose.

With skill born of experience, he shadowed the girl till late in the afternoon, when she was evidently returning to her lodgings. He saw her enter a rather doubtful house in Gleason's Court, and, having concealed himself in a doorway, he decided to wait till she should emerge. It was not like girls of her character to remain indoors evenings.

He had waited about half an hour, when he saw a man approach the place, and, after some delay, effect an entrance. The fellow wore a topcoat, with the collar turned up about his ears.

Still the detective waited.

At the end of nearly an hour the man emerged, and started downtown.

Sheridan Keene followed him nearly to the Common, then crossed the street and met him as if by accident.

"Hello, Wade!" he cried. "You are just the man I am looking for."

Wade was very pale, and there were dark rings about his eyes. He started nervously, yet smiled and shook the detective's hand.

"What have you been doing, Keene?" he demanded. "I have not seen you for two days."

"I could not help disappointing you," replied the detective regretfully. "I have been so frightfully busy on this case."

"What do you make of it?"

"Oh, I have it dead to rights now; all but recovering the girl's body," said Keene pointedly. "I am in an awful hurry now, for I must see Chief Watts, or I would tell you all the particulars. I have been busy straightening things out all the afternoon, and shall call at Doctor Lawton's house this evening at eight. If you will be there, I will tell you the whole story."

"Can't you tell me now?" asked Wade huskily.

"No, no! It's too long! I haven't the time. You can see me at Doctor Lawton's, and hear the whole of it."

"All right, then; I will be there."

Precisely an hour later Sheridan Keene rang the bell of Doctor Lawton's Beacon Street residence, and was ushered into the library. Both the doctor and his wife were there, and Wade had arrived an hour before. He sat in one corner of the room, without a vestige of color in his insipid face.

The anxiety and impatience of the others could scarce be restrained when Sheridan Keene was shown into the room.

"Oh, Mr. Keene!" cried the rector, starting up. "Have you any news?"

Keene begged him to resume his seat and be calm.

"I have news, sir," he rejoined gravely, "but you must hear it calmly and with patience."

"I will; I will, sir! Take a chair."

"Good evening, Mr. Wade," nodded Keene, accepting the seat. "You are here before me."

"Yes, I came right up here," said Wade faintly, with eyes never leaving the detective's grave face.

Sheridan Keene smiled merely, and turned again to Doctor Lawton.

"I said I had news for you, Doctor Lawton," he said slowly. "I will tell of what it consists. It appears that your niece, sir, who is a very good and virtuous girl, has been persuaded to yield herself to a design eminently worthy of true and lofty womanhood, and yet which a very natural and commendable sense of modesty has led her to conceal. That she is a good, true, and virtuous girl, however, do not for a moment doubt!"

"I don't quite understand you, sir," stammered the aged clergyman, with tearful eyes.

"It appears," continued Keene, with grave earnestness, "that your niece has been posing for a seminude figure in marble, for Mr. John Hale, the sculptor, who is a rigidly conscientious and very noble man."

Wade half rose from his chair, and then fell back, ghastly and trembling.

"Is it possible?" groaned Doctor Lawton faintly. "But my niece! My dearly beloved——"

"Oh, she is all right, sir!" interposed Sheridan Keene, with a wave of his hand toward the open door.

Instantly there appeared on the threshold a girl whose beauty pen could not well describe, with her pale face a picture of remorse and sorrow, yet with eyes in which there shone a light like that of infinite love.

Mrs. Lawton started up with a sharp cry of mingled gratitude and affection. Then Tillie Mason was upon her knees before her, with loving arms clasped around the woman's waist.

Sheridan Keene quickly rose to his feet and beckoned to the abject figure in the corner.

"Come, Wade!" he said sternly. "You will have to go along with me!"

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THE PLOT WORKED.

There are scenes from which a considerate and well-bred man instantly withdraws, and that of the reunion of Tillie Mason with her loving foster parents was one of these. Leaving all further disclosures and explanations until a subsequent time, Sheridan Keene immediately removed Ben Wade from the house and took a carriage which the detective had waiting outside.

An hour later Wade was lodged in jail, and at precisely nine o'clock Sheridan Keene entered the office of Chief Inspector Watts, who was waiting his coming.

"Well," he said inquiringly, as Keene entered.

"The case is ended, chief," replied Keene quietly. "Miss Mason is safe at home, and Wade and the Bell woman are in custody."

"Very good!" exclaimed the chief approvingly. "Sit down and give me the particulars."

"They may be briefly told," replied the detective, taking a chair near the chief's desk.

"As I at first suspected, they have had Miss Mason forcibly detained in a house in Gleason Court. I saw Wade go there about five o'clock. He remained there for an hour or more, and I followed him when he left, and made sure of catching him at Lawton's house later in the evening. Then I entered the house in Gleason Court with an officer, and arrested Jane Bell and rescued Miss Mason."

"What did the Bell woman have to say for herself?"

"Oh, she wilted like a wet rag, and confessed the whole business."

"That's well. And Miss Mason?"

"I took her to her own home a little later, and sent her in by a rear door, telling her to enter the room in which I should be received when she got word from me. She obeyed me to the letter. I wished to prepare the way a little for her, and tone down her offense, for she is really an awfully nice girl."

"Very considerate in you," nodded Chief Watts. "How about Wade?"

"I brought him away at once, chief. The people up there have no further use for him. He cried like a baby in the carriage, and for all I know is crying still."

"What did he have to say?"

"He told the whole story, chief. It corroborates that of Jane Bell."

"What was the story, in brief?"

"It seems that Miss Bell has been posing for John Hale for a year or more, and got it into her head that she ought to have him for a husband. I am satisfied that Hale never gave her any encouragement, for he is not that sort of a man. Nevertheless, she discovered the vanity of her affection, and that Hale was secretly receiving Tillie Mason as a model, and had fallen in love with her."

"Ah, I see."

"Then Miss Bell, who is a very clever, designing, and

unprincipled girl, laid in wait to trap Hale in some way and satisfy her jealous hatred of Tillie Mason. She found that Miss Mason was engaged to marry Wade, who is a weak sort of a chap, and evidently aware of it, and she made him her tool by arousing his jealousy and resentment."

"Was the abduction planned by him or Miss Bell?" inquired Chief Watts.

"Oh, Wade could not plan a dog house," laughed Keene. "It all was Miss Bell's work. She made Wade believe that, if Tillie Mason could be abducted, she could be forced into a marriage with him, and the matter squared up afterward."

"So they worked the scheme together? How so?"

"It was planned Tuesday morning, chief, and executed that evening. Wade sent word to Tillie Mason, and wanted her to meet him that evening, which she did; and he took her to the house in Gleason Court, where she has since been forcibly detained. That part of the design was dead easy."

"Naturally," bowed Chief Watts.

"About five o'clock Tuesday afternoon Jane Bell dressed herself up in garments resembling those Tillie Mason wore usually when out of doors at that time, and sent a telephone message to Hale, making an appointment."

"Ah, yes, I see."

"Hale suspected nothing, and, of course, kept the appointment; but did not meet Miss Mason. He hasn't looked deeper into the affair since, merely because he has been very careful to do nothing that might tend to expose Miss Mason's purpose in visiting his studio. Hence things have looked rather dark against him at times."

"Yes, that is true."

"Jane Bell's hatred was so strong, moreover," continued Keene, "that she would have done Tillie Mason up for good and all, after Hale was arrested, rather than have had him escape; and Wade found himself helplessly in the power of this she-devil. I didn't quite like to accuse Wade, when I first suspected him, lest I should have trouble in locating Miss Mason; so I went so far, even, as to arrest Hale. In that way I made it an easy matter to run down the Bell girl to a finish."

"It was a very clever move, Detective Keene. I felt sure it would work well when you reported the case to me yesterday afternoon," commented Chief Watts.

"Oh, I suspected the Bell girl was at the bottom of it from the very first," Keene continued. "Her artful manner, the readiness with which she betrayed that Miss Mason was the model, her getting rid of Johnny Miller to see me alone in the studio that morning, and her evident jealousy of the girl who had posed as the model, all indicated to me that Jane Bell was a crooked stick."

"I should say so."

"The greatest mistake she made was when she overshot the mark in trying to impress me to suspect Hale," laughed Sheridan Keene. "She didn't imagine that I was reading her at her true face value."

"Not an easy matter to read a face so painted as hers," laughed Chief Watts.

"Well, her hatred was sufficient to show through the paint. Furthermore, the persistent interest Wade had in all my doings suggested that there must be some collusion between him and Jane Bell, so I laid myself out to learn what it was. As a matter of fact, chief, I had the case pretty nearly to rights from the moment I caused Wade to faint in Vercelli's restaurant."

"So you told me," smiled the chief.

"It was very loyal in Hale to deny Miss Mason's favor conferred on him," observed Keene musingly. "He must be a very fine fellow to stand so true to the girl, and he even ruined the work of months in order to shield her from exposure. I really hope she is in love with him, as I already am sure he is in love with her."

"I guess there's no doubt about that," laughed Chief Watts.

"Why so, chief?" Keene asked eagerly.

"For I have detained Hale, and have told him the whole story," replied the chief. "They are very much in love, and have been for some time. I guess Wade's chances for Miss Mason were growing very slim weeks ago."

"And Hale?"

"I have him in the adjoining room," said Chief Watts, laughing genially. "I thought you might like to meet him under pleasanter circumstances."

"Indeed, I would!" cried Keene, springing up.

"Garratt!" called the chief. "Show Mr. Hale in this way!"

"Yes, sir."

John Hale entered the room with a glad smile on his face and with hand extended.

"Sheridan Keene," he cried warmly; "I am glad to meet you again!"

"And I you, Mr. Hale," laughed Keene, thrilling with pleasure. "But I am awfully sorry that I permitted you to ruin that magnificent piece of statuary."

Hale gave vent to a glad, ringing laugh.

"But you did me an everlasting service at the same time, Detective Keene," he cried, with joyous fervor. "You gave me a clear title to something ten thousand times more beautiful and desirable!"

"What was that?" demanded Keene eagerly.

John Hale drew up his splendid figure and threw back his head.

"To the live reality, God willing!" he cried, with joyous fervency.

THE END.

VILLAGES BUILT IN TREES.

People who live in trees or employ them as places of refuge are apt to be particularly miserable specimens of the human family, for their choice of a home invariably implies that they are not strong enough to meet their enemies on the level. The tree village recently discovered by Sir William MacGregor in New Guinea is the most remarkable that has been reported for a long time. Some distance inland he found a wretched, half-starved remnant of the Veiburi tribe. In one of their settlements all the villagers live in a single enormous tree, on whose wide-spreading branches four houses, with two stories each, had been constructed. Wide platforms are built in front of the houses, on which are piles of stones, kept to hurl at intrusive persons. These wretched people are in process of extermination by a powerful and warlike neighbor. The most numerous tree villages that have been found are along the Dua branch of the Mangala River, north of the Congo. The explorer who discovered them last year says the natives are the poorest and most wretched people he has seen in Africa.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Kaiser Dissatisfied With His Naval Airmen.

The kaiser is dissatisfied with the progress of aviation in Germany.

According to the *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, he has expressed to Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the navy minister, his entire dissatisfaction regarding the work of the naval airmen during the recent fleet maneuvers, in which neither the aëroplanes and hydroplanes, nor the airships, justified the expectations. The flying work proved worthless from the technical standpoint.

The kaiser had not saddled Grand Admiral von Tirpitz with the responsibility for the failure, but has expressed himself very strongly about naval flying. It has been stated that the famous sailor is in disgrace, which is not true. Nevertheless, the kaiser's stern warning is most unpleasant to the man who created the German navy.

The airship, *Hansa*, which attempted to fly from Hamburg to Heligoland recently, failed in consequence of the wind, and was compelled to return to Hamburg. Herr Birkmaier, a German aviator, fell while flying at Hanover, and died later in the hospital.

Great Values in Natural Gas.

Seventy-four million dollars was the value of the natural gas produced in this country for 1911. While there was a decrease in quantity from the output of 1910, the figures for the two years being 509,155,300,000 and 508,353,241,000 cubic feet, the value of the production in 1911 was nearly four million dollars greater than that of 1910, a gain of 4.76 per cent. The increase in demand for natural gas from consumers of all kinds, according to David T. Day, of the United States geological survey, in a report on the production of natural gas in 1911, just published by the survey, makes the supply of gas a matter of growing seriousness. Beyond question the natural gas that can be furnished in many of the fields of the United States is simply a function of the capital invested in natural-gas lines, and especially in power plants for pumping the gas. But the safety of such large investments decreases in proportion as the unsatisfied demand becomes indicative of a failing supply.

In Ohio and Indiana the yield has diminished so rapidly as to stop the investment of further capital necessary to increase production. One important feature bearing on the production of natural gas during 1911 was the excessive demand for it in Kansas City, Mo. This caused a board of public utilities to create a commission headed by Erasmus Haworth, State geologist of Kansas, to investigate the probable duration of the supply of gas to Kansas City. In his report Mr. Haworth expresses the opinion that a supply of natural gas sufficient for the needs of the city is not possible for longer than three or four years.

Pennsylvania was the greatest consumer of natural gas in 1911, with an output of 154,475,376,000 cubic feet; Ohio was second, with 112,123,029,000 cubic feet; West Virginia was third, with 80,868,645,000 cubic feet; and Kansas fourth, with 77,861,143,000 cubic feet. The Kansas figure includes gas piped from Kansas and consumed in Missouri, also gas piped from Oklahoma into Kansas and Missouri. In 1911 Pennsylvania used 103,227,580,000 cubic feet for manufacturing, and 10,221,153,000 cubic feet for other industrial purposes—power, et cetera. West Virginia used 50,130,046,000 cubic feet for manufacturing, and 16,868,278,000 cubic feet for other industrial purposes. Kansas used 46,570,417,000 and 3,602,355,000 cubic feet for manufacturing and other industrial purposes, respectively.

New Flying Machine Invention is Successfully Tested.

M. Rene Jampier, son of the late official timekeeper of the French Aëro Club, has invented a carburetor which not only will make it possible for an aviator to set his motor going without assistance, but will completely obviate the well-known dangers of combustion during flight, owing to the draft. The invention has been subjected to stringent tests by the laboratory of Chalais-Meudon, and has given entirely satisfactory results. "Jampier block tubes" have already been dispatched to Morocco for the use of military aëroplanes. Their value in the operations of war is obvious when one considers that an officer who should be compelled to come to the earth on hostile territory would run the instant risk of capture owing to the fact that single-handed he could not set his motor in motion.

New Use for Aeroplane.

In Algiers a military aëroplane has been set to a noble use of peace. In a skirmish with the Touaregs, Colonel Largeot was mortally wounded. The dying officer sought the services of a priest, but there was no priest with the column. Then the military aviator, Lieutenant Bregard, asked and obtained from his superior officer permission to fly to Laghaut, 150 miles away, where a certain order had residence. Within five hours' time a priest was at the bedside of the dying man, whose last moments were thus consoled by the ministrations of the church. In the history of aviation no finer page has been written than that.

France Seeks to Eliminate German-made Goods.

Opposition to the label "Made in Germany" is being taken up in France with more energy every day. A strong newspaper campaign is being waged against the importation of German merchandise, and the consul general decided a few weeks ago to purchase in the future only articles for official use from French makers.

M. Fernand, of Commerce, has made a similar "beau geste" by issuing a circular to the managers and professors of educational institutions throughout the country, in which he lays stress on the injury to French industries resulting from purchasing foreign goods, and asks that only articles which France does not produce, or in whose production other countries indubitably excel, shall be ordered from abroad.

The movement is really twofold: it seeks to eliminate German goods from the French market as much as possible, and also to encourage native industries by the use of goods "Made in France." It is interesting to note that the two English phrases "Made in Germany" and "Made in France," are being used in the press, instead of their French equivalents.

100,000 Sermons Preached on Tuberculosis.

Sermons to stir churchgoers to realize that the white plague is as much a social as a medical problem, and to arouse them to practical efforts to stay the disease, were preached from probably 100,000 pulpits in churches of every denomination throughout the land on a recent Sunday.

It was the annual observation of "Tuberculosis day." Statistics showing that 200,000 people die every year from the disease in this country, and that this total means a death every three minutes, were used to impress the congregations with the seriousness of the situation.

This English Barber Has Race Horses, and Occasionally Wins.

A back yard behind a barber's shop is a strange place for a training stable, but such a one there is in the town of Wolverhampton, England. The barber, A. J. Chamberlain, is owner, trainer, and rider, and won a race at the Dunstall Park meeting recently.

A steep passage at the side of the barber's shop leads into the long and narrow back yard, at each end of which is a stable In one is Relish, a good-looking chestnut, which won at Dunstall, and in the other Mark Twain, who has also won a steeplechase.

The barber explains that he always wanted to be with horses, but was apprenticed to a barber, and it was years before he bought his first horse. This cost him $10 and an old bicycle. At different times he has owned quite a string. Some of them, he admits, were failures, but he has never been able to afford a really likely animal. Can't Sing was his greatest extravagance, costing $268.

Keeping up his stable means all sorts of sacrifice for him, and he has often gone short himself so that Mark Twain should have the best oats procurable. He gets up at 6 in the morning to exercise and feed his horses, for the earnings of the barber's shop do not run to a stable lad of any sort.

He exercises his string on the roads round Wolverhampton, riding one and leading the other. For jumping practice he has rigged up a jump with an old scaffold pole in the back yard. The barber is a qualified gentleman rider, his racing colors are old gold and black, and he has never had a bet on a horse in his life.

Says Poor Man Has Best of Modern Living Conditions.

Doctor Charles H. Willits, of Philadelphia, medical director of a large life-insurance company, visiting Minneapolis, says the working people have all the best of it under modern economic conditions.

"Modern methods and organizations have stimulated the workingmen," he says. "They now have better homes, better en-

vironments, more money, and improved opportunities for education. The death rate among them has decreased, for they are no longer taken off by epidemics of contagious diseases caused by lack of sanitation.

"The rich man is gradually losing the use of his limbs. He rides to work in an automobile. He mounts to his office in an elevator. He sits in a comfortable desk chair for several hours. He eats heavily, and is seldom known to walk a mile a day.

"His blood becomes sluggish. His heart action is weakened. He contracts Bright's disease, kidney troubles, arterio-sclerosis, apoplexy, paralysis. The death rate among the rich increases in spite of medical care.

"It is not the higher pressure of commercial life that wears the business man out. It is his love of luxury. Well-to-do men are beginning to realize this danger, and are going in for golf and horseback riding."

No Maltese Cats on Isle of Malta.

James Oliver Laing, a former Kansas City newspaper man, who has been United States consul in Malta the last two years, says:

"The first question everybody asks me when he finds I am from Malta is whether Maltese cats aren't cheap there. When passing vessels stop at our port to coal, women invariably rush uptown in search of furry pets. I receive requests frequently —on one day I had as many as nine—from women who want to be put in touch with breeders.

"Now the strange thing is that there is not a so-called Maltese cat on the island. The only cats to be seen in the towns are in the streets, and there are not more than are to be seen in any other community of equal population. Moreover, while there are gray cats and black cats there is none which answers the description of a Maltese as we know it in America. Ask a native about the cats, and he will laugh at you.

"How the Maltese cat got its name I have never been able to discover, or why Malta came to be regarded as the island where the finest cats originate. I have studied the books and records in the public libraries of Malta, but have been unable to find any indication that cats ever abounded there. The name 'Maltese' is evidently a misnomer. Anyway, there are no Maltese cats in Malta."

Italy's King Paid Well for Killing a Rooster.

Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy, as a distraction from the cares of state, often gives some hours to the pleasures of the chase. The other day in his motor car he was going through a hamlet in northern Italy. In the road was a big rooster surrounded by his hens. Chanticleer ran from one side of the road to the other, and was crushed under the wheels of the car. At that moment a peasant appeared, pitchfork in hand. One of the hunters offered him five lire as pay for the rooster. But the peasant had recognized his sovereign, and demanded 50f. (about $10).

"You are the king," he said. "You are rich, and you ought to pay a poor devil well."

"Give him what he asks," said the king.

To Beautify Paris at Cost of $49,000,000.

"To live is the first necessity, and for such a city as Paris to live is to develop, clean, and beautify itself," were the words used by the Prefect of the Seine, M. Delanney, in calling on the Paris municipal council to sanction a further loan to enable the authorities to spend another $49,000,000 on the city's needs.

The largest part of this amount will, when borrowed, be applied to realize the colossal scheme of hygiene and antituberculosis reforms, on which Prefect Delanney has been engaged for some time.

In connection with this scheme it is purposed to spend $10,000,000 for enlarging and improving the water supply, $2,000,000 in precautions against the consumption scourge in addition to the $1,000,000 already spent, over $4,000,000 for keeping the roadways cleaner and in a better state of repair, $3,000,000 for rebuilding and enlarging the slaughterhouses, and $1,000,000 for improvements in public hospitals.

In addition to this program, no less than $24,000,000 will be applied to opening new streets and widening existing ones, to solve the traffic problem, which is still the gravest before the city authorities; $2,400,000 for schoolhouses, $2,200,000 for municipal buildings, and $400,000 for walks and plantings.

These operations, it is thought, form a minimum necessary to keep Paris in a condition worthy of its position among the capitals of the world. It is also purposed to expropriate and pull down a large number of unhealthful dwellings, and build in their places hygienic ones, in the course of the works contemplated.

The money, which will be borrowed for the purpose, will be the second installment of the great loan of $180,000,000 which the city of Paris was authorized by Parliament last year to make.

Gas Overcomes Train Crew.

Conductor Leonard Hallet lost his life in Stampede Tunnel, on the Northern Pacific Railway, at Seattle, Wash., when a freight train broke in two in the big bore, and the crew were overcome by gas.

Rescuers also suffered from fumes escaping from the engine, but succeeded in taking the train crew to the open air, where Hallet died.

Engine Goes into Chemung River and Fireman Drowns.

An open switch sent a New York Central train loaded with passengers to the brink of a forty-foot embankment at the edge of the Chemung River, at Corning, N. Y. The engine broke loose from the train and plunged into the river. Ralph E. Miller, of Corning, the fireman, was drowned. John L. Bunnell, also of Corning, the engineer, was seriously injured.

The air brakes stopped the passenger coaches within a foot of the edge of the river bank. Whether the wreck was caused by the failure of the engineer to observe a signal, or the failure of an interlocking switch, an official investigation will determine.

14 Dead, 90 Hurt in Wreck.

Fourteen persons were killed and ninety hurt in a wreck on the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad, near Mountz, La. The crash was caused by the negligence of a flagman, railway officials say. It is said the employee, whose name is Cunningham, was sent back from a crowded excursion train that had been stopped on a curve. He was to flag an oncoming through freight train, but it is alleged he failed to do so. The heavy freight engine rammed its way through the rear coach of the ten-car excursion train. Cunningham disappeared soon after the collision.

Pilot of Ill-fated Steamer Dies.

Captain Edward van Wart, who was pilot aboard the steamboat *General Slocum* when that vessel took fire in Hell Gate on June 15, 1904, causing more than 1,000 lives to be lost, died recently at his home in Brooklyn, aged seventy-three years.

Captain van Wart was at the wheel of the *Slocum* when the cry of "fire" was given. He turned the steamboat's nose for North Brother Island, where he beached her. He was exonerated of all blame for the disaster.

English Expedition to Map Mysterious Region on the Tibetan Border.

The almost unknown "no man's land" lying between the frontiers of India, China, and Tibet is the objective of a British expedition, which is to be dispatched from Calcutta shortly. This region, which has never been accurately mapped, may be the theater of important international disputes if the protest lodged by Great Britain against the Chinese encroachment of Tibet causes friction.

A year ago this frontier was invaded by a British military force which started from Sadiva, in eastern Assam, marched through the deadly jungle and across dangerous rivers to the Abor regions, where they avenged the murder by the Abor tribesmen of a British officer and several members of his party. The region was roughly mapped, and this map will serve as a check on the possible encroachment of China.

The new expedition is expected to continue the map work of the Abor punitive force. In the region of the friendly Mishmi tribe 750 men will be set to work building roads, and other members of the party will seek to discover how far the Chinese influence has spread toward Rima, a place which trustworthy maps give as being in southeastern Tibet.

Like its predecessor, the present expedition will kill two birds with one stone, for it will give a remote post of the empire the roads which will make it accessible, and will fortify against Chinese invasion, both military and commercial, one of the routes to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet.

Taken in connection with England's note to China reminding her to respect her treaty obligations concerning Tibetan neutrality, the dispatch of the expedition is highly significant.

Turtle Joke 15 Years Old.

Having heard stories about the great age to which land turtles live, Howard Rogers, of Red Bank, N. J., was only mildly surprised when he picked up a turtle and saw carved on its back, "H. C.—J. H., 1776." He was sure he had found a Revolutionary relic.

He took the turtle home and exhibited it proudly until Harry Clay examined the turtle, and reeled off a yarn that spoiled the Revolutionary theory.

Clay said that fifteen years ago he and John Henrehen, now of Newark, were boys together, and that they found that turtle. They, too, had heard stories of ancient tortoises, and determined to have a little fun. They carved the initials and the date, and set the turtle free, expecting that it would

be found again within a short time. The turtle did not let itself be found, and the two boys forgot their attempted hoax. Clay only remembered the incident when he saw his old tortoise friend.

Why Living is High.

Supplementing its recent discussion of the underlying reasons for the high cost of living, the National City Bank's November circular set forth some pertinent figures. For instance, while there was an increase of only 11 per cent in the number of farm families between 1900 and 1910, the number of persons engaged in manufacturing increased about 30 per cent in the same period, thus demonstrating the disproportionate increase in the number of consuming nonproducers of agricultural products compared with that of the producers. "A still more striking exemplification of the falling off in our surplus food products and the effort which the people of the United States are, perhaps, unconsciously making to substitute some other product therefor in our contributions to the world's markets," says the City Bank circular, "is found in the percentage which foodstuffs form in the total exports now as compared with earlier years. The share which foodstuffs bore in total exports of the fiscal years 1912 was but 19.5 per cent, while in 1900 it was 39.8 per cent, in 1890 42.3 per cent, and in 1880 55.5 per cent."

Teachers Told to Have Clean Faces.

"Teachers should enter the schoolrooms with clean faces and hands, with their hair combed neatly, and their general appearance beyond criticism," said Calvin S. Kendall, State commissioner of education, at the meeting of teachers, at Atlantic City, of the public schools of Atlantic and Salem counties.

A gasp of surprise went up from the schoolma'ams in the audience. They did not like the insinuation a little bit, and for a full minute an angry buzz of comment halted the speaker.

Spurious Notes and Coins Circulated During Year Only Totaled $39,000.

Counterfeiting materially decreased in this country during the fiscal year 1912. John E. Wilkie, chief of the United States secret service, ascribing the improvement largely to an era of prosperity, announces in his annual report that the representative value of spurious notes and coins circulated during the year was $39,000, the lowest since 1907.

Counterfeits during 1911 totaled $49,000, exclusive of $156,000 foreign currency, while the high-record year was 1910, when more than a half million dollars' worth of imitations were seized by the secret service.

There were 34 counterfeiters arrested during the year, while the record of 1911 was 410. Of these 244 were Americans. New York headed the list of States with 40 counterfeiting cases.

American to Introduce National Game in Paris Next Year.

Richard Klegin, of Sioux City, Iowa, who five years ago took several prize fighters to Paris for the purpose of giving boxing exhibitions there, now proposes to introduce the game of baseball in France, according to a statement made by him in Chicago. He said the baseball invasion of France would begin in May, 1913, and he thinks that it will require only a few weeks for the sport to conquer the country.

"International baseball may sound mythical," he said, "but is coming surely, and I am going to pave the way for it. The French are the greatest sport-loving people in the world, and it is only natural that they immediately will become enthusiastic for the greatest game of them all."

New Method of Slaughtering Animals.

A more humane instrument for slaughtering animals is being introduced in Europe. It is known as the Behr pistol. It resembles a pistol, but no powder or bullet is used with it. It is placed against the head of the animal that is to be killed—a vital point being picked out. When the trigger is pulled a strong spring drives a sharp steel blade into the victim's brain, killing it instantly and without pain or brutality.

Gets Bonus for Not Smoking.

If Outfielder Dan Moeller, of the Washington Americans, doesn't smoke during the 1913 league season, he will come in for a $200 bonus from Manager Griffith. And if he does smoke his contract will be cut just that much. It's a pipe, not cigarettes, in Moeller's case.

Train Bandit Gets Twenty-five Years.

Howard E. Edwards, the train bandit who held up and robbed a Louisville & Nashville passenger train near New Orleans on the night of September 4, and who pleaded guilty to the charges against him, was sentenced to serve twenty-five years in the Federal prison at Atlanta by Judge Foster, of the United States court. Edwards' plea of guilty was not allowed until after a commission of medical experts had declared him sane.

May Use Schools as Employment Bureaus.

Utilization of schoolhouses as employment offices has been taken up under consideration by the United States bureau of education, which has approved the movement to make the schoolhouses more general in their usefulness.

Professor John R. Commons, of the Wisconsin industrial commission, is one of the principal advocates of the plan. The plan contemplates the opening of a regular channel of intercommunication between the schools of a State with reference to the unemployed.

$700,000 Will be Expended on New Yale Playgrounds.

From details of Yale's new playground plan, as outlined at a university mass meeting, it was made clear that the proposed stadium will be the largest in America, and unique in many respects.

The stadium will be bowl-shaped, a feature entirely individual. It will seat 60,000 persons, and can be extended to seat 100,000 if it is desired. It will cost $300,000, and the new playgrounds will cost a total of $700,000. The original estimate was $500,000.

The chairman at the mass meeting was David Baggett, of New Haven, Conn., secretary of the so-called stadium committee. The details of the scheme were outlined by Noah H. Swayne, of Philadelphia, Yale, '03. The cost of the plan will be divided as follows:

For one acre of land, $150,000; coliseum or stadium, $300,000; combined baseball and track stands, $150,000; clubhouse, $100,000. Aside from the receipts of the games, the funds for paying for the stands will be provided by a bonding system, which will allow the general public to purchase, at face value, tickets to all the games in the stadium. In case a $100 bond is bought the purchaser will be allowed to purchase two tickets to every game for fifteen years. If a $200 bond is purchased three tickets will be allowed, and so on until the purchase of a $1,000 bond will allow eleven tickets. The bowl will be sunk 25 feet below the ground, and will extend 35 feet above the ground.

Motormen Are Higher Paid Than Preachers in Chicago.

Street-car employees in Chicago are more highly paid than clergymen, their average pay about equals that of college professors, and exceeds that of bank clerks. This was the opening statement by N. G. Moore, representing the Chicago Railways Company in the controversy before a board of arbitration over the subject of wages.

International President W. D. Mahon, of the Street Car Men's Union, had argued that a family of five in Chicago must have an annual income of $1,134 to make ends meet.

"Preachers average only $550 a year," said Mr. Moore. "They work for God, though, and not for a street railway company," said Circuit Judge Scanlon, representing the men on the board of three arbitrators.

Lake Disappears.

Some months ago a large lake formed near Dunkirk, in the Norwich district of Cheshire, England, famous for its rock-salt mining and brine pumping, as the result of a landslide, then suddenly emptied itself, millions of gallons of water disappearing into the earth. Lately the lake filled again, the water almost reaching its former level. Recently the lake disappeared again, and a big landslide occurred. The bed of the lake has sunk several feet.

With Returning Sight Woman is Horrified at New Styles.

The hobble skirt, the sheath gown, and all the latest fashions came in for severe criticism by an expert, at Columbus, Ohio. A woman who had not seen for four years had her sight restored to her, and was aghast at what was revealed to her.

Mrs. W. K. Ligette, a Columbus society woman, regained her eyesight. She gazed around her, and the first thing she said was:

"What awful frights women are making of themselves in the new styles."

Doctor Killed While Treating Patient.

Doctor J. D. Palmer, prominent physician, of Jacksonville, Fla., was accidentally shot and killed in his office when a loaded revolver dropped from a table.

The revolver had been laid on the table by a patient whom the doctor was treating at the time it exploded. The bullet entered the abdomen.

Now Make Milk from Vegetables.

An artificial milk, manufactured from vegetables, which is said to contain all the elements of the best cow's milk, and can be used for the same purpose, was shown to a gathering of scientists in London. Among those present were Sir William Crookes,

representatives of the home office, and the local government board, several medical officers of health, and other members of the medical profession.

A. J. Faulding, who will be responsible for the introduction of artificial (or synthetic) milk to this country, told a press representative that it was more digestible than ordinary milk, and its cream was far more nourishing. The milk could be used for all cooking purposes, and very good cheese could be made from it, but it would not produce butter. As the milk was germ free, it would keep longer than cow's milk.

The discovery was the work of three Germans, who spent three years in perfecting it. The process of manufacture was simple, and always produced the same result. It was not touched by hand or exposed to atmospheric influence until it was poured into bottles for delivery.

The principal vegetables used in the manufacture of the milk, added Mr. Faulding, were Soya beans—Japanese and Chinese beans—and it would yield a certain profit. Analyses would be made by public men, and the results published. It was proposed later to form a company and erect factories for the manufacture of the milk.

"Sis" Cow Wins Rights at Boston, Ga.

"Sis Cow" has come into her own and her tenure is expected to be permanent, as, according to the vote of the citizens of Boston, Ga., she will be allowed all the privileges of the streets, the election recently held being to decide once for all what the popular sentiment was in regard to the disposition of this unruly bovine.

Telephone at Every Bed in this Hospital.

"Hello, hello! Is that the isolation hospital? I want to speak to my little daughter, aged seven, to ask her how she is."

With praiseworthy promptness the anxious parent is switched through to the bed occupied by the little patient concerned, who picks up the receiver to answer the call.

This is not an imaginery incident of the juvenile "Never, Never Land," but an ordinary scene which is enacted every day in Isolation Hospital, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.

For "go-ahead" Guernsey has a telephone to every bed in its hospital, and all the little sick boys and girls, who are old enough to understand, can talk to their parents over the enchanted "wire."

The Isolation Hospital is some three miles out of town, and the bed of each little patient has a telephone connecting point on the wall alongside. In the hall is a switchboard, by means of which the exchange lines can be joined to any of the connecting points.

When a relative or friend of one of the children under treatment calls up from any part of the island, a nurse, if the patient is well enough, joins the exchange line to the connector at the bedside, and hands the child a flexible cord telephone, which enables it to hear and talk to its mother, father, sister, or brother.

In Guernsey babies are born into a telephonic atmosphere, and accept the telephone as an ordinary adjunct of life.

Open School for Mothers.

A school for mothers has been opened at Tottenham, one of London's poorer districts, where the high infantile mortality has been a source of great worry to the health authorities. At the school, which is the first of its kind in England, there are no fees and the curriculum includes infant feeding and hygiene, cooking, sewing, mending, and general housework.

The primary idea is to instruct the incredibly ignorant mother, found in the worst English slums, in the proper care of infant life. The mothers first of all will be taught that in many cases it is equal to murder to leave half-naked babies lying on the sidewalks outside saloons for half hours or hours at a time, even with doping them with drink or ale or gin, which is popularly supposed to keep them warm.

Progressive lessons will show them the folly of allowing babies to sleep with their parents, how to construct a first-class cot from a banana crate, how to knit woolen garments, and bathe and dress babies.

President-elect Once Saved Ball Game by a Sensational Catch.

Ex-Governor Robert Glenn, of North Carolina, in a recent address to a Democratic gathering, related an incident of his school days with President-elect Woodrow Wilson at Davidson College that interested ball fans.

"We were poor boys," said Governor Glenn, "and had to work our way through, practicing rigid economy. It was then Mr. Wilson showed the stern stuff of which he is made.

"He worked at anything his hands could find to do, sometimes at the most modest tasks. Nothing that was honest was beneath him.

"I was the pitcher for our baseball team in a game with a rival college. At a critical stage of the game the other college had men on the bases, two out, and a crack hitter at the bat.

"If he brought in those two men we were lost. So I threw the ball outside, but the batsman made a mighty jump and hit the ball a lick that seemed to send it up to kingdom come. The runners started for the home plate.

"Out in left field was a lean, spindle-shanked fellow. He started after that ball like a bullet. The chances were a hundred to one he never would make it, but we watched with mouths open and tongues hanging out.

"The ball went over a cut with the fielder half a second ahead of it. He had jumped the ditch, and with a long arm and outstretched hand had nailed it fair and square. He got cheers that nearly raised the roof of the grand stand.

"That fielder was Woodrow Wilson."

Writes Salesmen to Avoid Calamity Howling.

A letter of business good cheer has been sent out by the Samsons Hardware Company to its 500 salesmen throughout the United States. The letter was written by E. C. Simmons, chairman of the company's board of directors, and was in effect a request to the salesmen to avoid "calamity howling" over the result of the election, and to help keep up general business confidence. The letter in part follows:

"Now that the election is over, and it is a settled fact that Governor Wilson is to be the next President of the United States, I feel it to be the duty of all the business men engaged in large enterprises—in fact, business men of all kinds—to quiet the public mind, and relieve all apprehension of injury to the business interests of this country by the fact of Mr. Wilson's election. I do not believe it will disturb business a particle. I do not believe Governor Wilson intends to recommend, to influence, or to allow any legislation that will be injurious to the workingman, to the wage earner, or to the business interests of this country.

"The significant fact that so large a number of the American people have chosen Governor Wilson for their chief executive officer should be in itself a convincing argument, even to those who may differ from Governor Wilson politically, that these voters have faith in him as a leader, in his patriotism, his judgment, and his sanity."

Mother Unable to Regain Child, Lost Through Mistortune.

A mother's tearful plea for her daughter, lost through misfortune, failed to overcome the love the girl had developed for a kind foster mother when the two forces were matched in the county court in Chicago, and Mrs. Lena W. Mappin went back home to Hot Springs, Ark., disappointed and broken-hearted.

Mrs. Helena Mildner, who had reared little Anna, daughter of Mrs. Mappin by a former marriage since the child was forced from its mother through the latter's adversity, retained the custody of the girl in a legal fight. Judge Owens left the decision with the child.

"I don't know my real mamma," said the girl. "Mrs. Mildner is so good to me I want her as a mamma."

Sardines Can No Longer be Imported Under Cheap Disguise.

"A herring is a herring."

This decision of Assistant Secretary Curtis settles the dispute that has been before the treasury department for many months.

It was recently discovered that many importations of sardines were coming into the United States under the guise of herring, the duty on which is considerably lower than on other fish.

The treasury department made a deep study of the families and relationship of fish, deciding that anchovies, bristling, sardines, sprats, pilchards, and alewives are not herrings, and should be assessed 30 per cent ad valorem duty when shipped in tins and small packages, and three-fourths of one cent when shipped in casks, et cetera.

Try to Blow Up Church With Dynamite.

An attempt was made recently to blow up Calvary Presbyterian Church, at Canton, Ohio, with dynamite. Revenge is undoubtedly the motive, as the pastor, the Reverend Mr. Townsend, has been active for a year or more in a crusade against gamblers and keepers of dens of vice in the city.

Mr. Townsend has caused many arrests in his crusade, and numerous threats have been made against him.

The dynamite was discharged under a corner of the church, and destroyed a small portion of the foundation, smashed all the windows in the residence of W. A. McRea, a wealthy manufacturer, adjoining the church, and some windows of the church.

Three unexploded sticks of dynamite were found near the boiler in the basement of the church.

Mr. Townsend is one of the most popular ministers in the city. He is about thirty-five years old, and is the head of the anti-

vice crusade committee, which has been active against saloon keepers, gamblers, and keepers of disreputable places.

Stove Coal at $8 a Ton in Brooklyn.

In some sections of Brooklyn, N. Y., $8 a ton was asked for stove coal recently, the highest price since the coal strike of 1902. The small dealers are finding it difficult to get coal at any price, the large concerns which supply schools, hospitals, orphan asylums, and other institutions being supplied first.

A representative of the coal trade said that if coal were distributed properly among the dealers there would be no scarcity.

"It may be interesting for people who talk of coal being scarce to know that the total shipments of anthracite in October of this year exceeded the October shipments of last year by more than 200,000 tons," he said.

The New York Merchants' Association's special committee on the coal supply of the city is making an inquiry into operations in the anthracite coal region and the supplies on hand.

Inquiry also will be made as to what proportion of the recent production has been shipped to the West. It is said that the largest proportion of the recent shipments has been sent to the West, thereby causing the existing shortage in the New York market. It is explained that it is necessary that the entire Western supply be forwarded before the close of navigation.

If Western demands have been cared for, the merchants say most of the supply will be available now for the New York demand, and if the mines are operated to a maximum an ample quantity to meet New York's needs should soon be available.

Remarkable Mental Feats Performed by Youth in Ceylon.

The report has reached London, England, from the Ceylon branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, at Colombo, describing the remarkable mathematical feats before that body of a Tamil boy of 16, named Arumogan.

The youth knows little English except the names of the numerals and mathematical expressions. He is abnormal, not only in mind, but in body, for he has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Personally he believes that his mathematical genius is a gift of the god Subramana. He says that when he was eight years old he was taken to the Karthigay festival, at Tiruparangundan, and that in the night he dreamed that the god came to him and wrote the word "mathematics" on his tongue, and that in the morning he had 12 fingers and 12 toes, instead of the normal number.

At the same time, he declares, he found himself suddenly possessed of great calculating powers. Among the tests to which he was submitted by the Royal Asiatic Society, all of which he responded to in five seconds or less, were the square root of 853,776—the answer to which is 924; the cube root of 274,625—65; the product of 976 and 79—77,104; and the product of 982,347 and 231. The answer to the last, which is 226,922,175, came in two seconds.

In the case of one sum given him the examiners had the wrong answer set down in writing, but the correct answer was given by the youth. Problems in compound interest, discount, exchange, and other arithmetical rules were given him, but he answered all tests correctly, using only mental calculations.

From time to time the world has been startled by wonderful lightning calculators such as this. Romanoff, the lightning calculator, is still living, and has been able for years to juggle in an extraordinary fashion with figures. He can give in a moment the day of the week on which any given date fell. There died at the end of last year the famous lightning calculator known as the "Marvelous Griffith."

When discovered, at 27 years of age, by a Chicago newspaper man, he was working on a farm for 50 cents daily and his board. In February, 1910, a score of professors from Harvard University tried to corner Griffith, but he gave the solution to the problems set him almost immediately after they were mentioned to him.

Giacomo Manglamelli, when 8 years of age, could solve a great variety of very difficult arithmetical problems by the mere operation of the mind. The Royal Academy of Science, in Paris, placed him in a college, but it was found that his mental calculating facilities began to diminish when he devoted himself to ordinary study. The English mathematical Wallis performed arithmetical operations, such as the extraction of roots to forty decimal places, solely by his marvelous power of memory.

Decline of Racing Makes Turf Club Lose.

The Turf and Field Club, at Belmont Park, L. I., will close up for the winter for the first time in seventeen years. A meeting of the board of governors of the club was held recently, when the subject of closing the clubhouse for the winter was discussed. The result of the meeting was not announced, but it is understood that, in view of the falling off of the attendance, it was decided to close the clubhouse until the spring.

The Turf and Field Club, of which Perry Belmont is the president, is one of the surviving relics of the palmy days of turf racing on Long Island. With the passage of the law prohibiting betting, the club lost its attractive features, but with the revival of amateur meetings at Belmont Park Terminal the attendance increased. These meetings are now closed for the season, and instead of facing a heavy loss by keeping the club open during the winter, a departure of the hitherto fixed rule was decided upon.

Indian Chief Bacon Rind Does His Xmas Shopping.

Chief Bacon Rind, leader of the richest Indian tribe in the world, passed through the Union Depot, Kansas City, recently, on his way home to the tribal seat at Pawhuska, Okla. He and his squaw went to Kansas City to do some early Christmas shopping, and to visit his friend, Robert Witt, 3618 Treost Avenue. The chief seldom talks English, preferring his own language, but he did say that he liked Kansas City very well. The only real disappointment of the visit to Kansas City occurred when the chief visited a shop on Grand Avenue to buy a fancy vest. The shopkeeper searched through his stock, but could not find one to fit the chief, for he is a big man. He measures 49 inches around the chest, and is more than six feet tall.

Chief Bacon Rind is a national character. He is known as "the Silver-tongued Orator of the Osages," and has made frequent trips to Washington on matters pertaining to tribal affairs. He was elected chief of his tribe last July for two years. The chief has assumed many of the progressive ways of the white man, and believes in educating the Indian children in schools and business.

French Battleship Launched.

France's new battleship, *La France*, was launched at St. Nazaire, recently, and was named by Minister of Marine Delcassé. The vessel is a sister ship of the *Paris*, but will be equipped with heavier guns. The two warships of this class were provided for in the 1911 estimates, and the keel of the *La France* was laid down in August of last year.

Placing of Comma Involved Payment of $7,000.

The payment of $7,000 insurance resolved itself around the location of a little comma in Judge Seehorn's court, in Kansas City, recently. Had the comma been placed after one word in the insurance contract then J. Sidney Smith would have received the money. But as the punctuation was ordered by Judge Seehorn following another word, the fire insurance company was relieved of payment.

The suit was against the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company for payment of grain destroyed on a sidetrack. The sentence in the policy was "Grain in cars on sidetrack within 100 feet of the elevator." There was no punctuation. James H. Harkless, attorney for Smith, contended that a comma should follow "sidetrack," while Thomas H. Reynolds, representing the company, insisted that the comma belonged after "cars." The judge thought so, too.

Wonderful Machine to Lay Tracks.

A machine that can lay three miles of track a day is being used in the construction of the Excelsior Springs division of the Kansas City, Clay County & St. Joseph Railway. It is to be transferred to the thirty-three miles of unfinished track between Kansas City and St. Joseph as soon as the four-mile trackless gap between Kansas City and Excelsior Springs is finished. The tracklayer travels on the track it lays. The men who control the machine stands in the engine house, and lay the track by jerking certain levers. Behind the engine house the material trains follow close and feed ties and steel rails to the tracklayer. The ties are carried forward along a projecting arm by a belt conveyer. They are dropped in the right places and the rails are carried forward and set true to the gauge. Men follow and attach fishplates, and put in enough spikes to keep the rails from spreading as the track layer moves forward. The rails are spiked fast after the tracklayer has passed.

Plan New Railroad for Canada.

It was announced in local financial circles at Montreal, recently, that as a result of the entrance into Canada of a new and powerful group of English capitalists and continental bankers, Canada is to have another interocean railway.

The proposed line will run from the Pacific Ocean to Hudson Bay, and will be known as the Alberta, Peace River & Eastern Railway. The Canadian represent-

atives of the company have just received the sanction of the railway commission for constructing the first section, extending over 400 miles.

Auto Hearse Exceeds Speed Limit.

Charged with exceeding the speed limit in his automobile hearse, George W. Robertson, of North Bergen, N. J., undertaker, must pay a fine of $10, assessed by Police Judge Thomas Constello.

Policeman Farrell stopped the hearse as it was speeding through Main Avenue on its way to a funeral. When arrested, Robertson thought it was impossible for his machine to exceed the speed limit. There was sufficient evidence to convince the court.

Celluloid Collars Barred by this Railway.

An unusual order issued by the Philadelphia, Bristol & Trenton Street Railway Co., forbids conductors from wearing celluloid collars while riding on its cars. Several conductors have been badly burned when their celluloid collars caught fire through the blowing out of fuses on the back platforms.

Illinois Making Big Soil Survey.

What is now considered one of the most gigantic tasks ever undertaken by any group of agricultural experts in the interest of scientific farming is the compiling of the soil reports of every county in Illinois, now under way under the direction of Professor C. G. Hopkins, J. G. Mosier, J. H. Pettit, and Superintendent J. H. Readhimer, of the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois.

These soil maps are issued in the form of a bulletin for each county. Bulletins for Hardin, Moultrie, and Clay counties have already been issued, and those of Sangamon and La Salle are on the press. It is expected to continue this work until all the counties of the State have been surveyed. These maps will be of inestimable value to farmers.

Prisoner Escaped Through Sewer to Join His Young Bride.

Elmer Lewis, an escaped Federal prisoner, who crawled five blocks through a fifteen-inch sewer pipe to get free and be married, was started back to Fort Leavenworth penitentiary from Chicago, recently, in care of detectives after having been taken from his bride, from whom he had concealed his criminal career.

Lewis was serving an eight-year sentence for blowing open the safe of a Washington, D. C., postal substation.

He got out of the prison by hiding in a catch basin while cleaning an outhouse, and making his way into the sewer pipe. His bride fainted when she learned his story.

Finds Her Diamond in Fowl.

This chicken story may seem as if it came out of Winsted, Conn., but it is really an offering from truth-loving Brooklyn. The beginning of it was in May last, when Mrs. Charles Martin, of 6910 Third Avenue, Brooklyn, discovered that a large diamond set in a ring which she was wearing had dropped from its setting. The stone could not be found.

Recently Mr. Martin selected a fat chicken from his backyard flock, and killed it for dinner. Mrs. Martin was eating of the fowl when her teeth struck something hard, she says. Investigating, she amazed her husband by holding up to his view the long-missing diamond. The Martins suppose that Mrs. Martin lost the stone while feeding the chickens, but no theory is advanced to explain why the gem was found in the chicken's flesh, instead of in its gizzard.

Puts Ban on Shrewsbury Oysters.

The department of agriculture has put the once popular oysters from the Shrewsbury River under the ban. Secretary Wilson, in telegraphing recently to the United States district attorney, directing him to seize a consignment of these oysters, said: "The waters of the Shrewsbury River are polluted, and these samples of a brand of oysters once famous in New York are positively filthy and the worst I have ever seen."

For Fifty Years a Conductor.

Conductor Frank Geraghty has just completed fifty years of service in the employ of the Erie Railroad. For forty-two years his run has been over the Newburgh branch. His trainman has been on the same train for more than twenty years, and as the baggage-master was on the train before Geraghty arrived, no one really knows his term of service.

These men, "Frank," "Mike," and "Matt," compose the oldest crew in the service of the Erie. They have never had a serious accident, and never killed a passenger.

Pittsburgh Children Deposit $150,000.

Pittsburgh was one of the first cities in America to adopt the system of savings for school children. There are more than 35,000 school children in the city who possess bank books. These children deposit systematically at their own schools. There is credited to them $150,000 upon which they receive 4 per cent interest. The Pittsburgh Bank for Savings is one of the depositories.

The plan was first tried out in Ghent in 1873. Children were urged to save. When a child's savings amounted to one franc, or 20 cents of our money, the child was given a bank book and allowed to receive three per cent interest from the Bank of Belgium. The plan was received with favor, and the children saved earnestly. Many who had before squandered their money for sweets ate healthful food at regular hours, and thus helped their physical as well as financial health.

Find Second Largest Diamond.

A Johannesburg, South Africa, dispatch announces that a diamond of 1,649 carats was found in the Premier Mine recently, said to be second largest ever discovered.

The new stone is more than half the size of the Cullinan diamond, which came from the same mine, and has black streaks, but experts consider them to be only a flaw on the surface.

The value of the stone has not yet been ascertained.

Compiles Dictionary of Monkey Language.

A new revised dictionary of monkey language has just been issued through the French Academy of Sciences by Yves de Lage, long a laborious student of ape jaberings.

The dictionary even contains grammatical notes for advanced readers and an appendix giving in proper notation favorite songs among monkeys which they always sing in the same rhythm when feeling particularly well.

The monkey tongue has the advantage in that it comes unlearned to young monkeys, which is proved, says De Lage, by a baby monkey taken away and isolated seven years, which when brought back to its companions made itself understood perfectly.

Runaway Brings Dead Man to Life.

Brought to life by a runaway after two days' residence in a coffin was the unexpected result of Mike Scofield's trip in a hearse, at Sullivan, Wis.

"Dead."

That the verdict of Coroner Hix's hastily assembled jury was in accordance with the facts was the opinion of those who had thronged in front of the undertaking establishment when Scofield, a laborer, fell apparently lifeless to the pavement.

The body was placed in the customary pine box, and the next day the coffin was placed in a hearse for transportation to the potter's field. The roar and rumble of a train as it rushed past the hearse frightened the horses, and instantly the driver, hearse, and coffin were rattling over the road.

Scofield, aroused from an extended period of suspended animation as the hearse went cavorting over ruts and stones, gave voice to a thoroughly live man's phrase as the coffin was dumped into a ditch and the cover broken off.

Scofield caught the horses, patched up their driver, and assisted him back to the village.

German Walker Beats Record.

Muller, a professional, beat the world's walking record at Trentow, Germany, recently. He walked 10 miles in 1 hour 17 minutes 13 seconds. Then he walked 10 kilometers is 47 minutes 46 seconds, and in one hour's walk he covered 12,543 meters.

White Sox Ball Team Will Train on Pacific Coast.

President Charles Comiskey has decreed that the Chicago White Sox shall do their spring training on the Pacific coast again in 1913, although everybody was given to understand, back in 1910, that it would be a case of "never again" for the White Sox. The transcontinental jaunt in quest of a clime that is supposed to be more favorable than anything that can be obtained nearer home will, of course, be acceptable to those recruits who will make the trip, and who have yet to see much of the world at large. But to the experienced players, those who have already been through the mill, such an announcement is by no means pleasing, although there is one redeeming feature in that no one-night stands are to be played upon the homeward trip. The Sox will travel upon a special de luxe leaving Chicago on the night of February 20, and will come home from Paso Robies, the selected place, in the same manner. The only exhibition games will be with coast teams, and before the White Sox return they will be overnight guests of Frank Chance at Cub Ranch, all of which will be most pleasing to one C. W. Murphy.

The Nick Carter Weekly

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY **BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS**

When it comes to detective stories worth while, the NICK CARTER WEEKLY contains the only ones that should be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the workings of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer.

The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world and the stories of his adventures are read eagerly by millions, in twenty different languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. It proves conclusively that they are best.

We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

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